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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

TEEN-AGERS IN EDMONTON, 1921-1931:

EXPERIENCES OF GENDER AND CLASS

BY

(C)

REBECCA COULTER

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE

OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

IN

THE HISTORY OF EDUCATION

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, for acceptance, a thesis entitled "Teen-agers in Edmonton, 1921-1931: Experiences of Gender and Class"
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in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
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ABSTRACT

Many historians claim that a special stage of life known as adolescence was "discovered" in the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-centuries and that by the 1920s institutions specific to that age-group were well-established in western society. This thesis tests that interpretation of the experiences of teen- agers by using the case study approach to focus on the youth of a small western Canadian city, namely Edmonton, Alberta.

Through an examination of the lives of teen-agers in the labour market, in the schools, in youth organizations and in the courts, the thesis demonstrates that an adolescence marked by age-grading and segregation, delayed responsibility and prolonged dependency within the family was by no means a universally shared experience for teen-agers in Edmonton in the 1920s. In fact, the lives of teen-agers, as might be expected, were largely determined by the class location of their families. The main result of this was that the working class young often needed to enter the work force as early as possible, a situation which did not allow for an "adolescence". In addition, gender relations continued to play a large role in structuring teen-agers' experiences and girls, regardless of their class origins, found contradictions between their positions as "youths" and as "females".

That is not to say that changes were not afoot. In the case of Edmonton, as elsewhere, shifts in population structures and economic and social relations meant that teen-agers were increasingly excluded from the labour market and that large numbers were crowding into the high schools. These realities forced many adults to confront new issues about the young and develop strategies to cope with this age-

group. One of the major results of these efforts was the development of vocational education programs in the schools.

However, while the theory and practice of youth work, schooling and social welfare was being re-fashioned to take changing material circumstances into account, it is also true that old attitudes and practices continued to co-exist with the new. For teen-agers, then, Edmonton in the 1920s was a city in transition.

For my daughter, Kendra Christie Coulter

She has not known life without her mother's thesis.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

"There appears to be sweeping over the country a wave of immorality involving young people"[1] announced W.G. Carpenter, Edmonton's Superintendent of Schools, in 1922. He had just returned from a meeting where the behaviour of Canadian youth had been severely criticized by his colleagues from across Western Canada to find that his Board was being asked to allow dancing at grade twelve class parties. The ensuing debate, which continued to rage in one form or another for several years and involved school trustees, administrators, teachers, students and parents, revealed much about prevailing ideas on youth and something about the experiences of teen-agers in Edmonton in the third decade of this century. Indeed, some participants in the debate reflected views on the prolonged dependency of youth and the need for delayed responsibility, continuing adult supervision and age-segregation and grouping which would suggest that Edmonton's teen-agers in the 1920s were seen as modern adolescents. This would be in keeping with the arguments of historians such as John Gillis and Joseph Kett[2] who claim that adolescence as we now understand it was a creation of the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-centuries, a creation which, by the 1920s, had become well-institutionalized in most of the western world.

In his book, *Youth and History: Tradition and Change in European Age Relations 1770-Present*, John Gillis examines the changing status and experiences of young people in Germany and England over nearly two hundred years and concludes that adolescence was "discovered" in the period from 1870 to 1900. In pre-industrial Europe, argues Gillis, youth was an age of semi-independence and

youth groups and fraternities of various sorts maintained traditions of their own. With the onset of industrialization the traditions of youth were re-drawn along class lines and took on new meaning through the appearance of working class gangs and middle and upper class student radical or bohemian groups. By 1870, however, youth lost its relative autonomy and became an instrument of adult interests.

The actual "discovery" of adolescence Gillis assigns to the middle class for it was that class which first experienced both the major drop in child mortality and the change from high to low fertility encouraged by birth control that Gillis argues were the necessary pre-conditions for the existence of adolescence. The increasing likelihood that children would live to become adults and the decreased number of children in any given family encouraged parental attitudes towards children to change. Children became the focus of parental attention and were treated as individuals. Furthermore, with the decline of apprenticeship and the rise of the "white collar" labour market, schooling assumed new importance as it came to be viewed as a guarantee of future employment. As a result of these factors, life cycles were altered and young people between the ages of fourteen and eighteen became increasingly dependent family members, lost access to the economy and the society of adults and became the subjects of parental and institutional control.

If low mortality and low fertility made the discovery of adolescence possible, the "invention" of an adolescence defined by a certain set of very particular social and psychological qualities was, suggests Gillis, an unexpected offshoot of the reform of the elite British public schools which began with Arnold's tenure at Rugby from 1827-1839. While pre-industrial youth groups had developed traditions to control their own moral and sexual conduct, adults of the nineteenth-century elites co-opted those traditions and transformed them into conservative instruments of militarism, nationalism and patriotism while developing institutions such as the boarding schools which isolated youths from the broader society. As the

nineteenth-century wore on, parents and especially school masters used youth peer groups to enforce conformity and any sign of individualism was taken as evidence of sexual vice. By 1870, sport, based on the military model, took over from Latin study and the monastic life model as the rite of passage for youths and also became the device through which a consciously separate male world of muscular Christianity was constructed. By the early part of the twentieth-century, "...what were historically-evolved norms of a particular class became enshrined in medical and psychological literature as the 'natural' attributes of adolescence."[3] Thus science was called on to provide a new legitimation for old social controls. When conformity, self-denial and dependence became standards of behaviour for the young, the independence of working class youths and their resistance to those norms just became proof of their inferiority. It was a short step from this point to the criminalization of non-normative behaviour which then created the problem of juvenile delinquency.

Gillis is quick to point out, however, that while an adolescence marked by dependency, adult control and age grouping arose first among the middle classes, many youth workers were already by the 1880s trying to universalize the experience for all teen-agers without regard to class. A new generation of youth workers can be identified in this period and its members tended to romanticize youth "as the source of personal and societal revitalization" and hence "set out to free the young from the bonds of an urban-industrial civilization grown rigid and corrupt...by virtue of its own material progress."[4] In romanticizing youth, these new youth workers emphasized the physical and psychological side of adolescence in a move designed to encourage the natural unfolding and development of young lives. Gillis notes that ultimately this emphasis chained the young "to a new conformity sanctioned by positivist social science."[5] In addition, the attempts to protect the young from the evils of adult life resulted in youths losing many of the civil and social rights they

had earlier enjoyed and consigned them to a low status and dependent age group subject to adult control in all areas of daily life.

Joseph Kett traces a broadly similar history of youth in the United States in his book, *Rites of Passage: Adolescence in America 1790 to the Present.* While recognizing that many youths in agricultural communities tended to experience a state of prolonged dependency in seventeenth-and eighteenth-century America, he also suggests that by the early nineteenth-century, most youths between 10 and 21 existed in a state of semi-dependence in which their experience of adults was a curious mix of both freedom and oppression. Just as Gillis found with many youths of the pre-industrial period, so Kett discovered evidence that many American young people had relatively autonomous social groups or organizations. Further, the young in the new world seemed to replicate the peripatetic ways of their European peers, at least partly because the period from 1790 to 1840 was marked by the movement of young people from farms to cities. While noting that very real differences in experiences occurred from 1640 to 1840, Kett also sees an "underlying unity" in that two-hundred year period when "the immediate environment of young people was likely to be casual and unstructured rather than planned or regulated."[6]

Kett argues, however, that after 1840 a major shift in ideas and practices occurred both in Britain and the United States, a shift that was based on the belief that the "internalization of moral restraints and the formation of character were more likely to succeed in planned, engineered environments than in casual ones."[7] The initial impact of this belief was found in the changed treatment and rearing of children between the ages of 7 and 12 or 13 but ultimately the emphasis on the control of children's environments led adults to the problematic nature of puberty. Thus Kett situates the early development of modern ideas about adolescence in the 1840 to 1880 period though he places the growth of the institutions which would ensure an adolescent experience for the young in a somewhat later time frame,

specifically from about 1890 to 1920. He also notes that, paradoxically, at exactly the time when adults were developing a new ideology and practice with respect to youth (i.e. about 1820 to 1920), changes in the American economy made it possible for young people to achieve adult economic status at an early age.

Why then were adolescents becoming a dependent and protected age group by 1920? Part of the explanation, says Kett, lies with the tightening link between schooling and employment opportunities in the late nineteenth-century. A high school diploma was becoming an important entry qualification for many jobs and, perhaps more significantly, a necessary prerequisite for training in the professions. This meant that more and more young people remained in school for longer periods of time and thus were dependent and age-segregated through their teen-aged years. Like Gillis, Kett identifies middle class families as the first to contain modern adolescents not only because these families could afford the economic sacrifice needed to keep the young in school but because the middle class asserted its values of self-restraint, self-denial and obedience, the very values which in early twentieth-century America were thought to spell success in life.

Kett also agrees with Gillis that by 1900 efforts to universalize and democratize the concept of adolescence were well-underway so that "A biological process of maturation became the basis of the social definition of an entire age group."[8] Significantly, too, both historians agree that, in Kett's words,

> adolescence was essentially a conception of behaviour imposed on youth, rather than an empirical assessment of the way in which young people actually behaved...biology and psychology [were used] to justify the promotion among young people of norms of behaviour that were freighted with middle-class values.[9]

And Kett and Gillis both identify the norms of conformity, passivity and anti-intellectualism as central to the new middle class concept of adolescence.

It is important to emphasize here that while Gillis and Kett are in fundamental agreement with respect to situating the creation of a modern concept of adolescence in the late nineteenth- and early twentieth- centuries, identifying the middle class as the initial site of change and concluding that economic and demographic factors were crucial determinants of a new status for the young, they also represent two somewhat different views on the history of adolescence. Their positions, in fact, can be taken as excellent illustrations of a dispute which has been carried on in the literature of the history of young people for some time now and at least since the publication of Philippe Ariès' monumental work, *Centuries of Childhood: A Social History of Family Life*, first in 1960 in French and then in 1962 in an English translation.[10] The dispute centres on whether or not adolescence was a recognized stage of life prior to the latter part of the nineteenth-century, whether people in medieval, Renaissance and early modern Europe had any concept of adolescence.

John Gillis essentially accepts Ariès' position that even into the eighteenth-century "an ambiguity remained between childhood and adolescence on the one hand and the category known as youth on the other. People had no idea of what we call adolescence...."[11] Despite finding traces of a concept of adolescence in the eighteenth- century and further and growing evidence in the nineteenth-century, Ariès places any real recognition of adolescence in the period around 1900 in France and claims that widespread awareness occurred only after World War I. Demos and Demos, Elder and Bakan[12] also support this analysis with particular reference to developments in the United States. All these writers acknowledge the earlier existence of the category "youth" but argue that it was a far more inclusive term and included people sometimes even up to the age of thirty as well as young people who were semi-independent. Adolescence, as such, was "discovered" in the western world from about 1880 to 1920 they say.

Kett, on the other hand, argues

> The key contribution of the 1900-1920 period was not the discovery of adolescence, for in one form or another a recognition of changes at puberty, even drastic changes, had been present long before 1900.[13]

Kett discusses what he calls the "premodern form" of adolescence[14] and associates it with the aristocracy and the courage of young knights. Thus, in fact, he sees, with S.N. Eisenstadt,[15] a continuing presence across time for an idea of adolescence and sees not the absence of a concept of adolescence but rather differing concepts in different times and places. This is a position supported by several other historians. Natalie Zemon Davis, for example, quite explicitly challenges Ariès' views. While giving credit to Ariès, Keniston and Demos and Demos for helping us understand modern concepts of adolescence, she argues

> ...we should not reserve the term "adolescence" only for the forms and definitions which that stage of life enjoys in Western countries in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries....one might better assume that adolescence, the period from the onset of puberty to the full assumption of adult roles, is given some recognition, however slight, in every society; and one might then examine systematically the different ways in which it is defined, valued and organized.[16]

In other words, Davis is accusing those who find the discovery of adolescence in the last one-hundred years of "present-mindedness", a criticism which is echoed by Richard T. Vann and Adrian Wilson.[17]

In her own work, Davis found considerable evidence to suggest that the youth groups ("youth-abbeys") which had developed in France from the thirteenth-century onwards, "played *certain* [her emphasis] of the functions that we attribute to adolescence."[18] She also notes that sixteenth-century medical literature discusses "l'âge d'adolescence" as being from 14 to 20 or 21.

Several other recent studies also lend support to Davis' position. Georges Duby found a distinct category of "youth" or *juventus* among the nobility in twelfth-century France. Membership in this age category began when a male was

knighted and ended when he was married so theoretically it could last for a long time but usually did not. Duby claims that the stage of *juventus* was marked by certain characteristics, like modern adolescence, which made it a stage of life preparatory to the assumption of the responsibilites of full adulthood.[19] Irene Q. Brown and Richard C. Trexler have found evidence of a concept of adolescence in Renaissance Italy, Brown in the writings of humanists such as Vittorino da Feltre and Trexler both there and in the policies and practices of confraternities of youth.[20] Thomas Robisheaux, in a study of rural youth in the German Reformation, documents attempts by parents and other adults to control their offspring in a manner suggestive of the existence of what we now call the "generation gap". Adult concerns about youthful sexuality and the need to police the activities of the young speak clearly of an idea of adolescence.[21]

Steven R. Smith and Lawrence Stone have both argued that the seventeenth-century English also had a conception of adolescence.[22] Stone quotes from the late sixteenth-century writings of Thomas Wythorne to show that even the word adolescence was used in that period. Wythorne said "After the age of childhood [0-15], beginneth the age named adolescency which continueth until twenty and five...."[23] He then went on to identify this as the age when "Cupid and Venus" would be much in the minds of the young. Smith, both in articles on the London apprentices and in an article on religion and conceptions of youth, argues that clear evidence of a separate world of and separate expectations for youth can be found in seventeenth-century England. He claims, in fact, that "the seventeenth-century's conception of youth has some remarkable parallels with that of the twentieth century"[24] in that both associate youth with an "identity crisis". In addition, "there is in the early modern conception some foreshadowing of the modern romanticization of youth."[25]

N. Ray Hiner has studied American youth in the eighteenth- century and concluded that

> ...the standard view that nothing like modern adolescence emerged before the late nineteenth century must be revised. In the unstable social conditions they faced, in their prolonged dependence and marginality, in their psychological characteristics, in their relations with their elders, and in the specific adjustments they made as individuals, the youth of early eighteenth-century New England had a great deal in common with today's adolescents.[26]

Finally, Vivian C. Fox has examined the evidence from ancient to modern times and as a result essentially suggests that adolescence "in its most recognizable behavorial features" and "in its psychological manifestations" has been with us since at least since the days of ancient Greece.[27]

On the face of it, then, we appear to have two extreme positions which seem irreconcilable. On the one hand, Fox argues that a concept of adolescence has always existed and, on the other, Ariès claims that the concept is very modern and really developed only in the twentieth-century. How can we explain such apparently divergent views? Part of the explanation lies with the different ways in which historians choose to define adolescence and choose to understand what it is that adequately defines a concept. Historians such as Fox, Hiner and Smith tend to use constructs from developmental or Freudian psychology to examine historical actors in a way which suggests that they believe in the universality of psychological theories. Other historians such as Ariès and Gillis rely more on sociological theory to explain historical events and this means there is tendency to search the past for evidence of changes that can be linked to the form and content of modern institutions such as the school, the industrial family and so on. While it is risky to characterize either of the two fundamental positions too simply, it can be said that a reliance on the explanatory force of modern psychology causes a tendency to look for continuity and similarities in human experiences such as growing up whereas a

reliance on sociology often has the effect of making historians look for change and differences in order to demonstrate the impact of industrialization on the western world. The question of continuity versus change is not a new one in history so it is no surprise that it should be found in the history of youth. Unfortunately, however, the historians who use contemporary psychological or social theory to understand the past are often as guilty of present-mindedness as some of them claim Ariès is, though for different reasons. The psycho-historians, using the current socio-psychological definition of adolescence, seek evidence of this adolescence in the past. Put another way, they search past records for descriptions and definitions of young people which touch a chord in modern consciousness as examples of adolescent behaviour. This is true even for historians such as Smith and Hiner who, while carefully noting that both similarities and differences exist between youth in the past and present, make those judgements on the basis of our modern understanding of what it is to be an adolescent. The sociological historians, on the other hand, search for the point at which modern institutions and ideas started. Thus both groups, though in different ways, use the present as their benchmark.

This is, of course, a dilemma not unique to historians of youth. All historians live in the present and it is the present which shapes their interest and provides them with the analytical tools to understand the past. It is surely no accident that the two major books in English on the history of youth, those by Kett and Gillis, were published in the mid-1970s at the end of a period of major student and youth unrest. Nonetheless, it is important to try to understand the past in its own terms, to understand past peoples within their own cultural milieu, to understand how people gave meaning to their own experiences rather than to impose our language and meaning on them.

As Joan Simon has observed, many of the generalizations about the history of childhood and family "have been arrived at in the light of sociological and psychological concepts deriving directly from the study of modern institutions whose origin and development is the very matter in question."[28] She goes on to show how the presentist preoccupation with family and schools has distorted the history of childhood by virtually ignoring the whole issue of changing forms of employment for children as set within the broader framework of generally changing social relations. Because, she argues, the history of childhood has had as its focus the middle class child and family, because schooling has been identified as the key to modern childhood and adolescence, the majority of children for whom work was the central factor in their lives have been excluded from history. As a result, she feels that "the history of childhood seems unduly modernised and correspondingly class conditioned."[29]

In an interesting critique of the embourgeoisement thesis which permeates most work in the history of childhood, youth and family, Simon suggests that if historians turned their attention to working class children and child labour they might find that "'traditional society' was not so indifferent to childhood after all, that the significant ideas in this respect have spread upwards to dispel habits acquired by narrowly based social groups."[30]

It might be noted here, as well, that the history of youth would also benefit from a revision which took gender into account. The uncritical use of psychological and sociological theory, besides perpetrating the errors discussed already, combined with the over-all tendency of history and the social sciences to neglect women[31] has meant that most work on the history of youth has, in fact, been work on the history of male youths. The two major works examined earlier, *Rites of Passage* and *Youth and History*, give only passing mention to young females, primarily to note that as a group young women will be left out. Kett and Gillis both assign blame for this

neglect to the unavailability of sources though it is interesting to note that women historians are now beginning to tell the story of young women's experiences.[32] For the most part, however, females are found in one of two roles in the histories of youth. They are either the girls who appear when there are concerns about the sexual lives of boys or they are the "feminine influence" which must be rejected if boys are to become men. Indeed, both Kett and Gillis note a distinctly anti-feminine (they do not say misogynist) bias in the writings and practice of the youth workers who are credited with the discovery or invention of adolescence. Taken to its logical conclusion, the exclusion of the female suggests that the modern concept of adolescence is simply inapplicable to young women since it has been developed on the basis of one gender only.

Despite all these warnings and injunctions, some way to use terminology must be arrived at in order to write about young people. What seems to be the most adequate approach in the context of this thesis is to talk of teen-agers rather than adolescents. The term "teen-agers", used in a non-pejorative way, refers simply to persons between the ages of 13 and 19. It then becomes an important purpose of this study to determine whether teen-agers in Edmonton in the 1920s were called adolescents and whether they experienced a modern adolescence understood as an extended, protected and dependent childhood extending into the late teens with specialized age-segregated institutions and a psychology that marked it as "the awkward age" and a period of storm and stress. If Kett is correct in his claim that the institutions of adolescence were more easily established in towns and small cities[33] because adults were more able to closely supervise the activities of young people, then Edmonton of the 1920s might logically be seen as a city where teen-agers were likely to be modern adolescents. But were they?

In order to understand the place of teen-agers in Edmonton in the 1920s, it will be necessary to attempt to re-create the texture of their everyday lives. How did young people actually experience life in the years between childhood and adulthood? What happened to them in their families, schools, work places? How did they spend their leisure time? The answers to these questions will allow some assessment of the relationship of class and gender to the experience of growing up and will make it possible to determine whether "adolescence" was a common and shared occurrence for all teen-agers in Edmonton by 1931. Utilizing the sharper detail of limited chronology and restricted geographical focus will make possible the more systematic study of adolescence that has been called for by Davis.[34] It will allow not only a better understanding of the experiences of teen-agers in Edmonton but also make it possible to test the thesis that ideas about adolescence and the treatment accorded young people were shared throughout the western world though modified to some extent in each specific locality.[35] More specifically, in the Canadian context, a study of teen-agers in a small western Canadian city in the 1920s will further test Sutherland's claim that by the fourth decade of the twentieth-century English-Canadians had developed a consensus about the ways in which children and youths should be reared and treated.[36] Furthermore, it will do so on the basis of Neil Sutherland's own contention that our best understanding of the past will come when we discover how people actually lived their lives, how "parents and children had to and did make many conscious choices."[37]

A study of teen-agers in Edmonton, then, will contribute to the rather sparse body of literature on the history of youth in Canada and will do so through a case study of a western Canadian city. This is particularly significant for virtually nothing has been written about the history of childhood, youth or family in the prairie region.[38] There is no Canadian book to compare with the Gillis text on Europe or the Kett study of the United States. In fact, the history of youth has been most

often dealt with as a sub-set of the history of childhood or family. If this were done consciously and on the grounds that teen-agers were not seen in the past as a separate age-group with particular needs and characteristics, this approach would be justified. At this stage, however, no strong case has been made for the absence of a concept of either adolescence or youth in Canada and it is surprising that Canadian historians have not been more interested in the past lives of teen-agers.[39]

This is not to say that there is no useful material on youth and adolescence in Canada. Katz and Davey have contributed an interesting article to the debate on the "discovery of adolescence" through an examination of youth in Hamilton, Ontario in the mid-nineteenth century.[40] Utilizing material from the 1851 to 1871 census manuscripts and other research materials from the Canadian Social History Project, they set out to explore the questions "Did the stages in the lives of young people alter during early industrialization?"[41] and "Has a distinct stage in life which may be called youth or adolescence always been with us?"[42] To the first question, they answer "yes" by demonstrating how young people by 1871 no longer experienced the traditional pattern of leaving home at puberty to live in the homes of others. Rather, with the onset of industrialization young people came to spend the period of their lives between puberty and marriage in the homes of their parents. On the basis of this change in the life cycle, Katz and Davey then argue that the concept of adolescence is not premised on the understanding that there is a special time of life between puberty and marriage but that the concept derives from the need of social commentators of the late nineteenth- and early twentieth- centuries to describe a new stage in the lives of young people marked by a prolonged dependency on their parents and increasingly lengthened periods of schooling in age- segregated institutions. Adolescence, they say,

> ...may be defined as a phase of institutionalized dependency that came to characterize the experience of youth in the 19th century....the origins of behaviour we have come to associate with adolescence lay not in puberty but in the reaction to dependency, in the curious new conflict between biological maturity and cultural childhood that 19th-century society inflicted upon its youth. Adolescence, *as we know it*, [my emphasis] is a product of culture and of history.[43]

Katz and Davey, using a Canadian example, thus side with those who argue that adolescence was discovered in the late nineteenth-century.

Another study of Hamilton, Jane Synge's work on working class youth in the early twentieth-century,[44] provides a rather different perspective on teen-agers within the family. She argues, as has been done elsewhere,[45] that there were two separate worlds of youth, worlds very much dependent on family class origins. It is her contention that working class adolescents, while they did, indeed, remain in family homes, went to work early and contributed to the family wage. In other words, residence in the home of their parents did not mean that teen-agers were dependent on their parents. It meant, instead, that teen-agers were able to and were expected to contribute at least a portion of their earnings to the family. It was in the middle class only where teen-agers were dependent and stayed in school for extended periods of time.

While Katz and Davey and Synge examined the experiences of the young in the context of an Ontario urban centre, Gaffield and Levine chose to study a more rural setting.[46] As a result, they found that the 1861 and 1871 census evidence from the small town of Orillia revealed "significant differences in patterns of school attendance, employment and age at marriage compared to previous findings for urban Hamilton, Ontario."[47] This convinced them that adolescence could only be understood in relation to local conditions, a conviction they share with Elder who argues that broad generalizations about adolescence are risky even today.[48]

In the case of mid-nineteenth-century Orillia, Gaffield and Levine found that it was the nature and availability of employment opportunities that determined what experiences teen-agers would have and they note that changes in the economic structure had a differential impact on young men and women allowing men more independence and women less. Their emphasis on the employment possibilities as the key factor in determining the nature of adolescence suggests that Simon was correct in arguing that work, not family life or schooling, is the most fruitful area for studying the history of childhood and youth.[49] It is unfortunate that the new group of very productive labour historians in Canada have paid so little attention to the work of the young.[50]

The variable of employment options is also examined by Brookes in a study of rural youths in late-nineteenth-century Nova Scotia.[51] Brookes found that young males in Canning in 1871 faced a period of about ten years between school leaving at 16 or 17 and full independence. During this ten year period, young men lived with their parents in large families and "probably worked very hard without the reward of any formal wages."[52] Brookes suggests that the period of transition to full adulthood might well have taken even longer by the 1880s and 1890s when economic conditions worsened in the area. Young women faced a shorter transitional period of about three to four years before establishing their own households since they married at a younger age than men. The only option for young men and women seeking to avoid this long period within their own families was to migrate to work elsewhere and large numbers chose to do this. As Brookes notes, for the youth of Nova Scotia "going down the road" became a rite of passage,[53] a rite of passage which, incidentally, is reminiscent of the more traditional "tramping" experiences of youths in Europe in earlier times.

Brookes' discussion of the experiences of young people in rural Nova Scotia tends to confirm the view that a modern concept of adolescence was missing in that society. Similarly Joy Parr's insightful book, *Labouring Children: British Immigrant Apprentices to Canada, 1869-1924*,[54] must raise questions about the inroads any ideas about adolescence had made in other rural areas, most notably those of Ontario. Her analysis of the lives of the young immigrant children shows quite clearly that they began contributing their labour on farms and in farm homes from the age of 6 or 8 and by 14 were usually working full-time. While the immigrant children were often harshly treated and more often than not failed to gain a part in the emotional intimacy of a family, it is also clear that they were not alone in their labouring. All children and youths on farms, especially frontier farms, worked and their lives show little evidence of any experience of adolescence as we now understand it.

It is only in the histories of schooling and social reform that we find strong evidence that a modern concept of adolescence was entering the Canadian consciousness and that at least some young people were experiencing a longer period of protected dependency in age-segregated and specialized institutions. The history of compulsory public schooling has been relatively well-examined although much of the literature is of the institutional history genre and not as useful as it might be in illuminating the experiences of the young.[55] Interestingly enough, *Canadian Education: A History*,[56] edited by Wilson, Stamp and Audet and published in 1970 as a major contribution to the revision of Phillips,[57] remains the only text to take a national prespective on the history of schooling in Canada. Articles in that book on the period between 1870 and 1940[58] confirm that increasing numbers of young Canadians were staying in school for increasingly longer periods in their lives resulting in the growth of secondary schools and the modification of curricula and teaching methods to meet the changing nature of the student body.

Schooling in Ontario has been more studied than schooling elsewhere. Prentice has looked closely at the Ryersonian era[59] in that province and two collections of essays, *Education and Social Change: Themes from Ontario's Past* and *Egerton Ryerson and His Times* along with numerous articles by Lawr and Gidney, Davey, Gaffield, Katz and others[60] have illuminated changes in that province. Several studies on Ontario, for example, Morrison's and Houston's, have linked schooling to other aspects of social reform.[61] Much of this work has openly raised questions of class and gender and has provided the basis for many of the debates in educational historiography.[62]

Schooling in the west has received some attention through the series of essays published in *Shaping the Schools of the Canadian West* and *Schooling and Society in 20th Century British Columbia.*[63] Articles by Patterson, Sheehan, Jones, Wilson and others[64] provide interesting information on the development of the school system in the west and help explain the interface between schools and the broader community. Barman's book on private schools in British Columbia[65] gives an added dimension to our understanding of schooling in this country.

Unfortunately, it must be said that there are still major gaps in our knowledge about the history of schooling in Canada. High schools and vocational/technical education, topics especially relevant in understanding the lives of teen-agers in the past, have not been examined in any meaningful and thorough way. Stamp has contributed an informative article on high schools in the 1920s and 1930s[66] and Morrison,Dunn, Guildford and Enns have written usefully on vocational education.[67] Other studies can be found but in general they tend to be descriptive and uncritical accounts of the development of a system or a program.

A better guide to aspects of youthful experience can be found in the literature on youth organizations. There is a growing body of material on youth organizations in the United States and Great Britain[68] and historians are now beginning to look at

Canada as well. Mitchinson and Pedersen have examined the Young Women's Christian Association, Macleod has written on the Young Men's Christian Association, Prang on the Canadian Girls in Training and McKee on all the voluntary youth groups in Toronto from 1880-1930.[69] All these works tend to focus on the aims and roles of adults in youth work and confirm the view that youth organizations were based on an essentially modern understanding of adolescence and, in fact, were central agents in the dissemination of the ideas and practices now closely linked to the process of growing up.

Much of the work on youth organizations lends support to the claims of historians such as Sutherland that the growing group of urban, middle class social reformers wished to improve, protect and educate the children of the working class. Whether the social reformers did so from admirable motives as Sutherland suggests or for social control reasons as the radical revisionists suggest,[70] the most widely accepted historical interpretation acknowledges that the middle class built a system of schools, child health and welfare agencies and recreational and religious youth groups for the working class. However, this interpretation has now been questioned, most notably by David Macleod in his book, *Building Character in the American Boy: The Boy Scouts, YMCA, and Their Forerunners, 1870-1920.*[71] Macleod argues that boys' youth organizations were class-based and that the Y.M.C.A. and Boy Scouts, in particular, concentrated their efforts on building the characters of middle class, white, Protestant boys and, in doing so, helped the middle class develop a class solidarity and consciousness of its own. Working class lads were left to other youth groups. And so we are reminded again of the dangers of over-generalizing about the experiences of youth and we are given a salutary warning that the class structure of North America, however hidden it may be, permeates all aspects of social life.[72]

Youthful experiences of another sort have been examined by historians interested in juvenile delinquency. The American literature is especially rich with works by Platt, Mennel, Schlossman, Rothman, Ryerson, Brenzel, Hawes and others.[73] A significant British contribution can be found in an excellent book by Stephen Humphries entitled *Hooligans or Rebels? An Oral History of Working-Class Childhood and Youth 1889-1939*.[74] While most of the American work deals with delinquency from the perspective of the adult social reformers and debates the question of social control, Humphries looks at youthful "crime" from the point-of-view of the youths and their familes. He introduces the concept of "social crime", crime for family survival, and thus extends our understanding of the meaning of a significant part of the behaviour termed delinquent.

In Canada, Sutherland has examined juvenile delinquency in a major section of his book on English-Canadian childhood, Houston has written on Ontario, Matters on British Columbia and Coulter on Alberta.[75] Most of this work on juvenile delinquency has arisen out of a more general interest in child saving or child welfare and thus juvenile delinquency has been more studied within the context of social reform than within a perspective focussed on the social creation of adolescence. Historians have tended to follow the social reformers they study in speaking of delinquents as *children* in need of protection and reformation and have not examined the effects of legislation or the work of juvenile courts to see how these factors might have contributed to the development of new ideas about adolescence.

The emphasis of much of the literature which is helpful in understanding the history of youth, then, has not been on youth *qua* youth but on childhood and family. Even then almost none of the available Canadian secondary sources look at the actual lives of children though the History of Childhood Project at the University of British Columbia will begin to change this situation as its research

findings are published.[76] In Canada, as elsewhere, the history of childhood has been the history of public policy, of institutions and of adult responses to the young.

This is, of course, hardly surprising for of all the relatively silent actors of the past, young people have been the most silent of all. Children and adolescents have left few written sources for historians to use in their work and so historians hoping to re-create the lives and experiences of the young must do so largely through research materials produced by adults. Even these sources are too often fragmentary, especially in Canada and most especially in western Canada.

An obvious source of information about young people in the 1920s is oral testimony. The work of historians such as Paul Thompson and Stephen Humphries[77] demonstrates how oral history can illuminate our understanding of the past and Neil Sutherland and Jean Barman have turned to oral history in their recent work.[78] What is clear, however, is that oral history projects can only be truly successful if they are undertaken on a large scale, a scale well beyond the financial and time constraints imposed on an individual graduate student researcher. Small numbers of interviews can provide illustrative material but they are a shaky base on which to build an historical interpretation. For this reason, information gained through oral interviews will only be used in this dissertation as one type of evidence to support more general arguments.

More traditional sources have been selected to support this work on teen-agers in Edmonton though much of the information collected is spotty and incomplete. *The Edmonton Journal, Edmonton Bulletin*, the *Western Catholic, Edmonton Free Press* and the *Alberta Labour News* for the years under study were reviewed. Records of the Alberta government were combed for information and the papers of the Alberta Employment Service, the Minimum Wage Board and the Department of Neglected Children proved particularly helpful. The Annual Reports of the Department of Education along with the magazine published by the Alberta

Teachers' Association (and for some part of the period the Alberta School Trustees) and the minutes of the Edmonton Public School Board were essential in developing a picture of changes in schooling for the period 1921-1931. Unfortunately, the minutes of the Edmonton Separate School Board for the same period are not available and even school yearbooks are difficult to uncover. The papers of the City of Edmonton, especially those of the Welfare Board, the Police Commission and the Health Department, contained material relevant to a history of teen-agers. Reasearch was also undertaken in the collections of private papers of Edmontonians who were known to be involved with issues pertinent to a study of youth. In this category, the papers of Emily Murphy were found to contain much relevant material. The far from complete papers of several unions were consulted as were the minutes of the Edmonton Trades and Labour Council. Also far from complete, though nonetheless helpful, were the extant records of the Young Men's and Young Women's Christian Associations, the Canadian Girls in Training, the Boy Scouts and the Girl Guides. The Provincial Archives of Alberta also houses an interesting set of papers from the Beulah Home, a home for unwed mothers. Various other miscellaneous collections in the Provincial Archives of Alberta, the Glenbow Archives, the City of Edmonton Archives, the University of Alberta Archives and the Public Archives of Canada were examined.

Unfortunately, materials such as the accession lists or circulation records of the Edmonton Public Library which might have shed light on what teen-agers were reading or what adults were reading about teen-agers have been lost and no records from news agencies or magazine distribution centres were found. For similar reasons, the movies which teen-agers were watching could not be analyzed.

Another significant source of information was the Census of Canada for the years 1911, 1921 and 1931 and the Census of the Prairie Provinces for the years 1916 and 1926 along with census monographs on topics directly related to the

employment and dependency of young people. *The Labour Gazette* contains several articles which have a bearing on a study of teen-agers in Edmonton and several other government publications added to the information base on apprenticeship, training and employment.

Piecing together information from this wide variety of sources required painstaking work and the result is a far from complete picture of the lives of teen-agers in Edmonton. The absence of a substantial body of published research on Edmonton and on Alberta[79] has only made the task of reconstructing the experiences of teen-agers more difficult. On the basis of the available documentation, both primary and secondary, much of what can be said is suggestive rather than definitive. Nonetheless, this study does help enlarge our understanding of the experience of being young in Edmonton in the 1920s and should, on that basis, assist in filling an existing gap in Canadian social history.

FOOTNOTES

[1]Minutes of the Edmonton Public School Board (hereafter EPSB), 9 February 1922, p.3408.

[2]Joseph F. Kett, *Rites of Passage: Adolescence in America 1790 to the Present* (New York: Basic Books, Inc., Publishers, 1977); John R. Gillis, *Youth and History: Tradition and Change in European Age Relations 1770-Present* (New York and London: Academic Press, 1974).

[3]Gillis, *Youth and History*, p.114.

[4]Ibid., pp.141-142.

[5]Ibid., p.142.

[6]Kett, *Rites of Passage*, p.111.

[7]Ibid., p.112.

[8]Ibid., p.215.

[9]Ibid., p.243.

[10]Philippe Ariès, *Centuries of Childhood: A Social History of Family Life*, trans. Robert Baldick (New York: Vintage Books, 1962).

[11]Ariès, *Centuries of Childhood*, p.29.

[12]John Demos and Virginia Demos, "Adolescence in Historical Perspective," *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 31 (November 1969): 632-638; David Bakan, "Adolescence in America: From Idea to Social Fact," in *Twelve to Sixteen: Early Adolescence*, ed. Jerome Kagan and Robert Coles (New York: W. W. Norton, 1972), pp.73-89; Glen H. Elder, Jr., "Adolescence in the Life Cycle: An Introduction," in *Adolescence in the Life Cycle*, ed. Sigmund E. Dragastin and Glen H. Elder (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1975), pp.1-22.

[13]Kett, *Rites of Passage*, p.243.

[14]Ibid., p.133.

[15]S. N. Eisenstadt, *From Generation to Generation: Age Groups and Social Structure* (Glencoe, Illinois: The Free Press, 1956); S. N. Eisenstadt, "Archetypal Patterns of Youth," in *The Challenge of Youth*, ed. Erik H. Erikson (Garden City, New York: Anchor Books, 1965), pp.29-50.

[16]Natalie Zemon Davis, *Society and Culture in Early Modern France* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1975), p.108.

[17]Richard Vann, "The Youth of *Centuries of Childhood*," *History and Theory* XXI (1982): 279-297; Adrian Wilson, "The Infancy of the History of Childhood: An Appraisal of Philippe Ariès," *History and Theory* XIX (1980): 132-153.

[18]Davis, *Society and Culture*, p. 108.

[19]Georges Duby, "In Northwestern France: The 'Youth' of 12th-Century Aristocratic Society," in *Lordship and Community in Medieval Europe*, ed. Frederic L. Cheyette (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1968), pp.198-209.

[20]Irene Q. Brown, "Philippe Ariès on Education and Society in Seventeenth- and Eighteenth-Century France," *History of Education Quarterly* 7 (Fall 1967): 357-368; Richard C. Trexler, "Ritual in Florence: Adolescence and Salvation in the Renaissance," in *The Pursuit of Holiness in Late Medieval and Renaissance Religion*, ed. Charles Trinkaus and Heiko A. Oberman (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1974), pp.200-264.

[21]Thomas Robisheaux, "Peasants and Pastors: Rural Youth Control and the Reformation in Hohenloe, 1540-1680," *Social History* 6 (October 1981): 281-300.

[22]Steven R. Smith, "The Ideal and the Reality: Apprentice-Master Relationships in Seventeenth Century London," *History of Education Quarterly* 21 (Winter 1981): 449-459; Steven R. Smith, "The London Apprentices as Seventeenth-Century Adolescents," *Past and Present* 61 (1973): 149-161; Steven R. Smith, "Religion and the Conception of Youth in Seventeenth-Century England," *History of Childhood Quarterly* 2 (Spring 1975): 493-516; Lawrence Stone, *The Family, Sex and Marriage in England 1500-1800* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1979).

[23]Quoted in Stone, *The Family, Sex and Marriage*, p.318.

[24]Smith, "Religion and the Conception of Youth", p.512.

[25]Ibid., p. 513.

[26]N. Ray Hiner, "Adolescence in Eighteenth-Century America," *History of Childhood Quarterly* 3 (1975): 273.

[27]Vivian C. Fox, "Is Adolescence a Phenomenon of Modern Times?" *History of Childhood Quarterly* 5 (Fall 1977): 285.

[28]Joan Simon, "Childhood in Earlier Seventeenth Century England," in *Informal Agencies of Education: Proceedings of the 1977 Annual Conference* (London: History of Education Society, 1979), p. 1.

[29]Ibid., p. 23.

[30]Ibid.

[31]See, for example, Dale Spender, ed., *Men's Studies Modified: The Impact of Feminism on the Academic Disciplines* (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1981); Liz Stanley and Sue Wise, *Breaking Out: Feminist Consciousness and Feminist Research* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1983); Joan Kelly, *Women, History, and Theory* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1984); Berenice A. Carroll, ed., *Liberating Women's History: Theoretical and Critical Essays* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1976); Angela Miles and Geraldine Finn, eds., *Feminism in Canada: From Pressure to Politics* (Montreal: Black Rose Books, 1982).

[32]For example, see, Carol Dyhouse, *Girls Growing Up in Late Victorian and Edwardian England* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981); Deborah Gorham, *The Victorian Girl and the Feminine Ideal* (London: Croom Helm, 1982).

[33]Kett, *Rites of Passage*, p.245.

[34]Davis, *Society and Culture*, p.108.

[35]This view would be supported by Tamara Hareven, "An Ambiguous Alliance: Some Aspects of American Influences on Canadian Social Welfare," *Histoire Sociale/Social History* 3 (April 1969): 82-98; Neil Sutherland, *Children in English-Canadian Society* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1976); Patricia T. Rooke, "The 'Child Institutionalized' in Canada, Britain and the United States: A Trans-Atlantic Perspective," *The Journal of Educational Thought* II (1977): 156-171; Robert S. Patterson, "The Establishment of Progressive Education in Alberta" (Ph.D. thesis, University of Michigan, 1986); Rebecca Coulter, "Alberta's Department of Neglected Children, 1909-1929: A Case Study in Child Saving" (M.Ed. thesis, University of Alberta, 1977).

[36]Sutherland, *Children in English-Canadian Society*. Some questions about Sutherland's interpretation of the achievement of consensus are raised by, for example, Patricia T. Rooke and R. L. Schnell, *Discarding the Asylum: From Child Rescue to the Welfare State in English-Canada (1800-1950)* (Lanham: University Press of America, 1983).

[37]Neil Sutherland, "Social Policy, 'Deviant' Children, and the Public Health Apparatus in British Columbia Between the Wars," *The Journal of Educational Thought* 14 (August 1980): 81.

[38]Among the few articles are H. C. Klassen, "In Search of Neglected and Delinquent Children: The Calgary Children's Aid Society, 1909-1920," in *Town and City: Aspects of Western Canadian Urban Development*, ed. Alan F. J. Artibise (Regina: University of Regina Canadian Plains Research Center, 1981), pp. 375-391; Leslie Savage, "Perspectives on Illegitimacy: The Changing Role of the Sisters of Misericordia in Edmonton, 1900-1906," in *Studies in Childhood History: A Canadian Perspective*, ed. Patricia T. Rooke and R.L. Schnell (Calgary: Detselig Enterprises Limited, 1982),pp.105-133; Rebecca Coulter, "'Not to Punish But to Reform': Juvenile Delinquency and Children's Protection Act in Alberta, 1909-1929," in ibid., pp.167-184; David C. Jones, "'We can't live on air all the time': Country Life and the Prairie Child," in ibid., pp.185-202; Rebecca Coulter, "The Working Young of Edmonton, 1921-1931," in *Childhood and Family in Canadian History*, ed. Joy Parr (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart,1982), pp.143-159. Children and family life in the fur trade era have been examined in Jennifer S. H. Brown, *Strangers in Blood: Fur Trade Company Families in Indian Country* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1980) and Sylvia Van Kirk, *"Many Tender Ties": Women in Fur Trade Society 1670-1870* (Winnipeg: Watson & Dwyer Publishing Ltd., 1980).

[39]A few historians are beginning to look at the lives of teen-agers and youth but at this writing most of their work is still in progress. Paul Axelrod is examining young people at university during the inter-war years, Michael Welton is looking at radical youth in the 1930s and I am working on the Dominion-Provincial Youth Training Programme and the Canadian Youth Commission.

[40]Michael B. Katz and Ian E. Davey, "Youth and Early Industrialization in a Canadian City," in *Turning Points: Historical and Sociological Essays on the Family*, ed. John Demos and Sarane Spence Boocock (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), pp. S81-S119.

[41]Ibid., p.S81.

[42]Ibid., p.S82.

[43]Ibid., p.S117.

[44]Jane Synge, "The Transition from School to Work: Growing Up Working Class in Early 20th Century Hamilton, Ontario," in *Childhood and Adolescence in Canada*, ed. K. Ishwaran (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson Ltd.s 1979), pp.249-269.

[45]Coulter, "The Working Young."

[46]Chad M. Gaffield and David Levine, "Dependency and Adolescence on the Canadian Frontier: Orillia, Ontario in the Mid-Nineteenth Century," *History of Education Quarterly* 18 (Spring 1978): 35-47.

[47]Ibid., p.41.

[48]Elder, "Adolescence in the Life Cycle."

[49]Simon, "Childhood in Earlier Seventeenth Century England."

[50]For example, Gregory S. Kealey, *Toronto Workers Respond to Industrial Capitalism, 1867-1892* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980) and Bryan D. Palmer, *A Culture in Conflict: Skilled Workers and Industrial Capitalism in Hamilton, Ontario, 1860-1914* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1979) only mention youths very briefly in discussions of apprenticeship.

[51]Alan A. Brookes, "Family, Youth, and Leaving Home in Late-Nineteenth-Century Rural Nova Scotia: Canning and the Exodus, 1868-1893," in *Childhood and Family in Canadian History*, ed. Joy Parr (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1982), pp. 93-108.

[52]Ibid., p.98.

[53]Ibid., p.108.

[54]Joy Parr, *Labouring Children: British Immigrant Apprentices to Canada 1869-1924* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press and London: Croom Helm, 1980). See, also, Kenneth Bagnell, *The Little Immigrants* (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1980); Gillian Wagner, *Barnardo* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1979); Phyllis Harrison, *The Home Children* (Winnipeg, Watson and Dwyer Publishing Ltd., 1979); Patricia T. Rooke and R. L. Schnell, "The King's Children in English-Canada: A Psychohistorical Study of Abandonment, Rejection and Canadian Response to British Juvenile Immigrants 1869-1930," *Journal of Psychohistory* 8 (Spring 1981): 387-420.

[55]J. Donald Wilson has written several excellent articles which review the field of educational history in Canada. See, for example, J. Donald Wilson, "Some Observations on Recent Trends in Canadian Educational History," in *An Imperfect Past: Education and Society in Canadian History*, ed. J. Donald Wilson (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Centre for the Study of Curriculum and Instruction, 1984), pp.7-29.

[56]J. Donald Wilson, Robert M. Stamp and Louis-Philippe Audet, *Canadian Education: A History* (Scarborough: Prentice-Hall, 1970).

[57]Charles E. Phillips, *The Development of Education in Canada* (Toronto: Gage Ltd., 1957).

[58]Wilson, Stamp and Audet, *Canadian Education*, Part Three, "Society and Education in the New Dominion."

[59]Alison Prentice, *The School Promoters: Education and Social Class in Mid-Nineteenth Century Upper Canada* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1977).

[60]See, for example, Paul H. Mattingly and Michael B. Katz, eds., *Education and Social Change: Themes from Ontario's Past* (New York: New York University Press, 1975); Neil McDonald and Alf Chaiton, eds., *Egerton Ryerson and His Times* (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1978); Ian E. Davey, "Educational Reform and the Working Class: School Attendance in Hamilton, Ontario, 1851-1891" (Ph.D. thesis, University of Toronto, 1975); Chad Gaffield, "Schooling, the Economy, and Rural Society in Nineteenth-Century Ontario," in *Childhood and Family in Canadian History*, ed. Joy Parr (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1982),pp. 69-92; R.D. Gidney and D.A. Lawr, "Community vs. Bureaucracy? The Origins of Bureaucratic Procedure in the Upper Canadian School System," *Journal of Social History* 13 (March 1980): 438-457; R. D. Gidney and D.A. Lawr, "Egerton Ryerson and the Origins of the Ontario Secondary School," *Canadian Historical Review* LX (December 1979): 442-465; Robert M. Stamp, *The Schools of Ontario, 1876-1976* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982).

[61]Susan E. Houston, "The Impetus to Reform: Urban Crime, Poverty and Ignorance in Ontario, 1850-1875" (Ph.D. thesis, University of Toronto, 1974); T.R. Morrison, "The Child and Urban Social Reform in Late Nineteenth Century Ontario" (Ph.D. thesis, University of Toronto, 1971).

[62]See Wilson, "Some Observations" for a discussion of this.

[63]David C. Jones, Nancy M. Sheehan and Robert M. Stamp, eds., *Shaping the Schools of the Canadian West* (Calgary: Detselig Enterprises Limited, 1979); J. Donald Wilson and David C. Jones, eds., *Schooling and Society in 20th Century British Columbia* (Calgary: Detselig Enterprises Limited, 1980).

[64]See, for example, Robert S. Patterson, "Voices from the Past: The Personal and Professional Struggle of Rural School Teachers," in *Schools in the West: Essays in Canadian Educational History*, ed. Nancy M. Sheehan, J. Donald Wilson and David C. Jones (Calgary: Detselig Enterprises Limited, 1986), pp.99-111; Nancy M. Sheehan, "Education, the Society and the Curriculum in Alberta 1905-1980: An Overview," in ibid., pp.39-56; Nancy M. Sheehan, "The WCTU and Educational Strategies on the Canadian Prairie," in ibid., pp.193-211; David C.

Jones, "Schools and Social Disintegration in the Alberta Dry Belt of the Twenties," in ibid., pp.265-283; L. J. Wilson, "Perren Baker and Alberta's School District Reorganization," *Canadian Journal of Education* 2 (1977):25-36; Robert S. Patterson, "Progressive Education: Impetus to Educational Change in Alberta and Saskatchewan," in *The New Provinces: Alberta and Saskatchewan, 1905-1980*, ed. Howard Palmer and Donald Smith (Vancouver: Tantalus Research Limited, 1980),pp.173-198. The three most useful collections of articles on schooling in the west are Sheehan, Wilson and Jones, *Schools in the West*; Jones, Sheehan and Stamp, *Shaping the Schools*; Wilson and Jones, *Schooling and Society.*

[65]Jean Barman, *Growing Up British in British Columbia: Boys in Private School* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1984).

[66]Robert M. Stamp, "Canadian High Schools in the 1920's and 1930's: The Social Challenge to the Academic Tradition," in *Historical Papers: A Selection from the Papers Presented At the Annual Meeting Held at London 1978*, ed. Terry Cook and Claudette Lacelle (Ottawa: Canadian Historical Association, no date).

[67]Timothy A. Dunn, "Teaching the Meaning of Work: Vocational Education in British Columbia, 1900-1929," in *Shaping the Schools*, ed. Jones, Sheehan and Stamp, pp.236-256; T. R. Morrison, "Reform as Social Tracking: The Case of Industrial Education in Ontario 1870-1900," in *The Journal of Educational Thought* 8 (August 1974): 87-110; David Stanley Enns, "Technical Education and Industrial Training in Early Twentieth Century Canada: The Royal Commission of 1910" (M.A. thesis, Dalhousie University, 1982); Janet Vey Guildford, "Technical Education in Nova Scotia, 1880-1930" (M.A. thesis, Dalhousie University, 1983).

[68]See, for example, Dominick Cavallo, *Muscles and Morals: Organized Playgrounds and Urban Reform, 1880-1920* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1981); David I. Macleod, *Building Character in the American Boy: The Boy Scouts, Y.M.C.A., and Their Forerunners, 1870-1920* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1983); Brian Morris, "Ernest Thompson Seton and the Origins of the Woodcraft Movement," *Journal of Contemporary History* 5 (1970): 183-194; John Springhall, *Youth, Empire and Society* (London: Croom Helm, 1977); Michael Blanch, "Imperialism, Nationalism and Organized Youth," in *Working Class Culture: Studies in History and Theory*, ed. John Clarke, Charles Critcher and Richard Johnson (London: Hutchinson & Co., 1979), pp.103-120.

[69]David Macleod, "A Live Vaccine: The Y.M.C.A. and Male Adolescence in the United States and Canada 1870-1920," *Histoire Sociale/Social History* XI (May, 1978):5-25; Leila Gay Mitchell McKee, "Voluntary Youth Organizations in Toronto, 1880-1930" (Ph.D. thesis, York University, 1982); Wendy Mitchinson, "The Y.W.C.A. and Reform in the Nineteenth Century," *Histoire Sociale/Social History* XII (November 1979): 368-384; Diana L. Pedersen, "'Keeping Our Good Girls Good': The Young Women's Christian Association of Canada, 1870-1920" (M.A. thesis, Carleton University, 1981); Margaret Prang, "'The Girl God Would

Have Me Be': The Canadian Girls in Training, 1915-39," *Canadian Historical Review* LXVI (June 1985): 154-184.

[70]For a discussion of moderate and radical revisionists see, J.Donald Wilson, "Historiographical Prespectives on Canadian Educational History: A Review Essay," *The Journal of Educational Thought* 11 (1977): 49-63; Wilson, "Some Observations"; Neil Sutherland, "Introduction," in *Education and Social Change* (New York: New York University Press, 1975), pp.xi-xxxi.

[71]Macleod, *Building Character.*

[72]S. Mealing, "The Concept of Social Class and the Interpretation of Canadian History," *Canadian Historical Review* XLVI (September 1965): 201-218 is one of the articles most quoted to point out the lack of an adequate class analysis in Canadian history writing. On the importance of class analysis see Leo A. Johnson, "The Development of Class in Canada in the Twentieth Century," in *Capitalism and the National Question in Canada*, ed. Gary Teeple (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1972)pp. 141-183. Two differing ways of viewing class in Hamilton can be found in Palmer, *A Culture in Conflict* and Michael B. Katz, *The People of Hamilton, Canada West: Family and Class in a Mid-Nineteenth Century City* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1975). On Toronto see, for example, Wayne Roberts, *Honest Womanhood: Feminism, Femininity and Class Consciousness Among Toronto Working Women*, 1893-1914 (Toronto: New Hogtown Press, 1976); Michael J. Piva, *The Condition of the Working Class in Toronto-1900-1921* (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1979); Kealey, *Toronto Workers Respond.* See, also, Alfred A. Hunter, *Class Tells: On Social Inequality in Canada*, 2nd edition (Toronto: Butterworths, 1986). Besides providing an historical perspective on the development of class, this book contains a useful bibliography of the literature on class in Canada.

[73]See, for example, Joseph Hawes, *Children in Urban Society: Juvenile Delinquency in Nineteenth Century America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971); Robert Mennel, *Thorns and Thistles: Juvenile Delinquents in the United States, 1825-1940* (Hanover, N.H.: University Press of New England); Anthony M. Platt, *The Child Savers: The Invention of Delinquency* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969); Stephen Schlossman, Love and the American Delinquent: The Theory and Practice of "Progressive" Juvenile Justice, 1825-1920 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977); Ellen Ryerson, *The Best Laid Plans: America's Juvenile Court Experiment* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1978); LeRoy Ashby, *Saving the Waifs: Reformers and Dependent Children, 1890-1917* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1984); Barbara Brenzel, "Lancaster Industrial School for Girls: A Social Portrait of a Nineteenth Century Reform School for Girls," *Feminist Studies* III (Fall 1975): 40-53.

[74]Stephen Humphries, *Hooligans or Rebels? An Oral History of Working-Class Childhood and Youth 1889-1939* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1981). In the American context, David Nasaw, *Children of the City: At Work and at Play* (Garden City, New York: Anchor Press/Doubleday, 1985) uses primary sources to look at the lives of the young from their point-of-view.

[75]Sutherland, *Children in English-Canadian Society* contains a substantial section on the treatment of juvenile delinquents. See, also, Susan E. Houston, "Victorian Origins of Juvenile Delinquency: A Canadian Experience," in *Law and Social Control in Canada*, ed. William K. Greenaway and Stephen L. Brickey (Scarborough, Ontario: Prentice-Hall of Canada, Ltd., 1978),pp.168-190; Susan E. Houston, "The 'Waifs and Strays' of a late Victorian City: Juvenile Delinquents in Toronto" in *Childhood and Family in Canadian History*, ed. Joy Parr (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1982), pp.129-142; Diane L. Matters, "The Boys' Industrial School: Education for Juvenile Offenders" in *Schooling and Society in 20th Century British Columbia*, ed. J. Donald Wilson and David C. Jones (Calgary: Detselig Enterprises Limited, 1980), pp.53-70; Coulter, "'Not to Punish But to Reform'".

[76]For a description of this project see, Neil Sutherland, "The Canadian Childhood History Project" in *CHEA/ACHE Newsletter/Bulletin* III (October 1986), pp.15-19.

[77]Paul Thompson, "The War With Adults," *Oral History* 3 (Autumn 1975): 29-38; Humphries, *Hooligans or Rebels?*.

[78]Jean Barman, *Growing Up British in British Columbia*; Neil Sutherland, "The Role of Memory in the History of Childhood," paper presented at the 64th annual meeting of The Canadian Historical Association, Montreal, Quebec, 28 May 1985.

[79]Among the few works which contain some useful material on Alberta and/or Edmonton in the 1920s are John Richards and Larry Pratt, *Prairie Capitalism: Power and Influence in the New West* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart,1979); David Leadbeater, "The Development of Capitalism in the Area Currently Called Alberta" (M.A. thesis, University of Alberta, 1980); Gerald Friesen, *The Canadian Prairies: A History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1984); J.G. MacGregor, *Edmonton: A History* (Edmonton: Hurtig Publishers, 1967); John F. Gilpin, *Edmonton: Gateway to the North* (n.p.: Windsor Publications, 1984).

CHAPTER TWO

LOCATING TEEN-AGERS IN A SOCIAL CONTEXT

To write a history of teen-agers is to recognize two fundamental and oppositional ways of seeing youth. On the one hand, some theorists have spoken of youth as a "class" thus elevating age to a role as a primary determinant in human experience.[1] Young people are seen as part of a commonality which has as its material base nothing more than age and from this shared experience of age, it is argued, there develops a culture of youth. Social relations arise from conflicts between generations where the older generation wields the power, controls the resources and oppresses the younger. As a result, youth come to a self-consciousness of themselves as a "class" with common interests.

On the other hand, an alternative way of thinking about the young is to see them not as a homogeneous group but as an age cohort which contains the broader contradictions of society. That is, youths are examined primarily in terms of their membership in wider groupings such as social classes which are believed to transcend any age group identification.[2]

Each of the two ways of conceptualizing youth has strengths and weaknesses and the power of one view of youth over the other can only be determined by exploring the life experiences of teen-agers within actual and concrete settings. This means that to understand the history of teen-agers in Edmonton in the 1920s, it is important to establish what we can of the circumstances in which teen-agers lived.

The 1920s in Edmonton began with a recession and ended with a depression but the years in-between were marked by a period of slow but steady growth. As Careless has shown, the city had become a small but "modern" one by 1914 with a

developing infrastructure of rail transport, public utilities and transit, schools, hospitals and public welfare agencies.[3] This trend continued in the years after the war. However, the big boom in land speculation of the pre-World War I period left its mark on the city for the various districts of Edmonton were spread out over a sizeable area with large vacant spaces in between and only dirt or gravel roads joining them.[4] It was only as the 1920s wore on and relative prosperity returned that the population began to increase and new houses were constructed on many of the empty lots. In 1923, with the completion of the pipeline from Viking, these homes and others could be heated with gas, another sign of the move towards "modernization". In this same period, automobiles became the common means of transportation and some Edmontonians began to explore the ways in which air transport could give access to the products and markets of the Canadian North[5].

However, as Voisey argues, cities such as Edmonton were, by the 1920s, primarily agricultural service centres and this meant that urban development was closely linked to the ups and downs of an economy dependent on farm prices and production.[6] Small local markets made industrial development on any large, cost-efficient scale virtually impossible. Indeed Leadbeater has suggested that in the 1920s there was a general decline in the number of functioning local and regional companies as Alberta experienced a second major phase of monopolization in which central Canadians assumed control of the economy and left local businessmen in the role of compradors.[7]

According to Betke, municipal life in Edmonton was, in large measure, controlled by a small local elite in a manner not unlike that of other Canadian cities.[8] This elite was comprised of only about one-half per cent of the total city population and was predominantly Canadian or British born. The most common place of origin was Ontario and, as might be expected, most members of the elite were Protestants.[9] Roman Catholics were thus seriously under- represented in the

power structure.[10] In a phenomenon well-noted in other cities,[11] the families of the elite tended to live in a socially distinct neighbourhood, a neighbourhood identified by Betke as in the west end and north of the river.[12] Working class neighbourhoods, on the other hand, could be found in areas such as the north-west district of Calder which centred on the rail yards and the north-east district which surrounded the packing plants. Depending on the socio-economic position of their families, then, teen-agers grew up in geographically and socially distinct neighbourhoods.

While a small elite may ultimately have controlled local affairs, an active union movement could be found in Edmonton and the Socialist Party of Canada and the Dominion Labour Party had prominent supporters in the city.[13] It was not unusual for labour candidates to get elected to the public school board and the city council and even serve as board chairmen or mayors.[14] Friesen has, in fact, suggested that by the inter-war years, a clear working class consciousness was developing in prairie urban centres as a result of workers' struggles in their places of employment. But he also identifies a third "social grouping" situated between wealthy businessmen and poor labourers and composed of those people employed in the professional and human services sectors. These teachers, ministers, lawyers, nurses and government employees were not, Friesen says, a conscious social class although they lived in ways which were closer to those of the business elite than to those of the labouring poor. Politically, however, they were, as a group, inconsistent, sometimes initiating or supporting social reform activities and sometimes backing business demands.[15] As the writing on social reform has shown, however, it was this "middle class" group that was most often actively engaged in working directly with young people and their families through schools, Children's Aid Societies, youth organizations and citizen groups such as, in Edmonton, the community leagues.

In Alberta's capital, community leagues were first organized in the period from 1917 to 1921 to work for local improvements in their specific districts of the city.[16] Individual leagues and the Federation of Community Leagues which was established in 1921 became the means by which local citizens could lobby the city council and the school boards on behalf of their members. The community leagues also served as the organizational impetus for many recreational activities within districts, building skating rinks, sponsoring classes of various sorts, hosting dances and so on. It can be argued that leagues served a populist purpose by encouraging the development of a traditional sense of community and collectivity within an urban setting. Their focus on family-supporting activities made an important contribution to the social milieu in Edmonton.

The Census in both 1921 and 1931 indicates that most families in Edmonton were headed by males though in 1921 there were 978 female heads of family recorded, a number which had grown to 2,653 by 1931.[17] Wage earnings were the primary source of family income and, as might be expected, the level of support varied considerably not only because of different wage scales but because some forms of employment were more secure than others. In 1921, for example, many workers in the construction trades worked less than 40 weeks in the year for average weekly salaries ranging from $16.53 to nearly $29.00. Railway conductors, brakemen and trainmen worked more weeks and at much better wages, presumably because their unions were much stronger and work was not so seasonal. Conductors worked 50.34 weeks at $43.89 a week; brakemen and trainmen were employed 47.08 weeks at $36.30 per week. Professionals and white collar workers also tended to work on average close to a full year with educationalists earning $50.77 a week, clergymen $27.26, engineers $41.40 and clerks $26.00 to $29.00. Male laundry workers, servants and waiters earned only $12.00 to $13.00 per week. Women workers earned considerably less than men at $8.89 per week for domestic

work, $12.71 for factory work, $14.38 for sales work, $18.00 to $22.00 for clerking and $24.84 for teaching.[18] This pattern was still apparent in 1931 for though women in paid employment worked on average 46.69 weeks to men's 40.42 weeks in the year, they earned an average annual salary of $641 while men received $1097.[19] The wide range of incomes earned by family heads would clearly have some effect on the experiences of young people growing up in those familes and, as we shall see in the next chapter, influenced the decisions made with respect to school leaving and employment.

Of the 14,523 familes reported in the 1921 Census, 6,922 owned their own homes and 7,601 were renting.[20] The average monthly rental paid was $26.80 although 3,890 families paid less than this and 2,192 families paid less than half the average rental rate.[21] The condition of the properties rented at low rates likely left a lot to be desired in terms of size and facilities. In 1931, of the 12,234 families of male wage earners, 6,429 owned homes and 5,805 rented accommodation. The 1931 Census also notes the presence of a large number, 4,960, lodgers in the city.[22]

Most teen-agers would have grown up in two-parent families with one or two siblings on the average although actual family size could vary significantly from one household to the next. The 1921 Census indicates that the average family size in Edmonton was 3.92 persons and the average number of children was 1.96. Variation between families owning their own homes and those renting can be found. The former category had somewhat larger families of an average size of 4.05 persons with 2.07 children while the latter category had an average size of 3.79 with 1.85 children.[23] In 1931, 13,901 families had children in them and of those families 34.30% had only one child, 28.93% had two children and 17.60% had three children.[24]

Teen-agers, as an age cohort, made up a sizeable and growing portion of the total population of Edmonton in the 1920s. As a percentage of the total population, they grew from 11.51% in 1921 to 14.50% in 1931. Indeed, while the population of Edmonton grew by about 35% in that ten year period, the teen-age population grew by 70%. (See Table 1)

TABLE 1

Teen-aged Population in Edmonton, 1921 to 1931

YEAR	TOTAL POP.	POP. 13-19	TEEN-AGERS AS A % OF TOTAL POP.
1921	58,821	6,770	11.51
1926	65,163	8,769	13.46
1931	79,197	11,480	14.50

Sources: *Census of Canada, 1921 and 1931*; *Census of the Prairie Provinces, 1926.*

This is a phenomenon worth noting since Kett and Gillis[25], among others, have argued that it is when their numbers decline that teen-agers become more "valuable" and thus more likely to be subjected to the attention and solicitudes of parents and other adults. Other historians have suggested that this may be the case for middle-class youths but that it is increased and visible numbers of working-class youth, especially those finding recreation in public places, that motivate the development of agencies designed to supervise and control the activities of young people.

By far, the largest percentage of young people in Edmonton were Canadian-born. In 1926, for example, of the 13,510 young people between the ages of 10 and 19, 10,697 or 79.18% were born in Canada, 1,628 or 12.05% were born in the British Isles or British colonies and 1,185 or 8.77% were "foreign-born". Of this last group, 667, or more than half, had been born in the United States. Most of these children, then, had experienced a dominant English-speaking culture from the time of birth. In fact, Edmonton in 1926 was a city in which over 90% of all the inhabitants had been born in Canada, the British Isles or the United States.[26]

An examination of the proportion of males to females in the youthful population reveals an interesting trend. In the population as a whole the ratio of men to women was 1.36 in 1921 and 1.69 in 1931.[27] Among teen-agers, however, the ratio was 0.86 in 1921 and 0.87 in 1931. The discrepancy in numbers is much more marked in the middle to upper age range of people in their teens. (See Table 2)

While the ratio of 13 and 14 year old males to females approximated the over-all norm for the city, the ratio of 18 and 19 year old males to females was skewed considerably from that norm. Why did young women in their late teens out-number young men in such a noticeable fashion? Because of the differential nature of the shift, a plausible explanation seems to be that urban boys were leaving the city to find jobs on farms or in the primary resource industries while rural girls were entering the city to find work in the service, clerical and manufacturing sectors. While historical sources are silent on the exact ages of the single men who drifted in and out of the western cities in the early decades of this century, young men of 15-19 were likely part of that migration. On the other hand, newspapers

and youth workers often commented on the fact that young girls from the country side flocked to the city in search of employment.[28]

TABLE 2

SEX RATIOS IN THE 10-19 AGE GROUP IN EDMONTON,1921-1931

	1921		1926		1931	
AGE	M	F	M	F	M	F
13	508	531	677	712	728	689
14	537	534	652	691	850	786
15	455	495	597	647	789	830
16	457	536	557	675	825	943
17	377	521	553	639	763	911
18	392	529	498	709	747	1010
19	395	503	496	666	654	955

Sources: *Census of Canada, 1921 and 1931*; *Census of the Prairie Provinces, 1926.*

Although the employment reporting mechanisms of the 1921 and 1931 Census, by grouping 10 to 14 year old or 10 to 15 year old workers together, make it impossible to separate out pre-teens from teen-agers, it is clear that a significant proportion of the urban labor force was under the age of twenty. This is especially true of the female work force for in 1921 25.61% of employed women were 10 to 19, a figure which dropped to 20.28% in 1931. In 1921 7.82% of male wage earners were 10 to 19 though in 1931 this decreased to 5.77%.[29]

Most of the employed teen-agers were 15 or older which is no surprise since Alberta had compulsory school attendance legislation by the 1920s and the Edmonton Public School Board hired an attendance officer to enforce the legislation.[30] In 1921, of the 9,760 children 7 to 14 years of age, 9,091 or 93.15% were at school. By 1931 attendance at school was a way of life for 98.60% of the 7 to 14 year olds. The percentage of older teen-agers in school also increased over the decade from 42.88% to 56.52%, an occurrence that will be discussed in detail later.[31]

Educational and recreational options for teen-agers grew in the 1920s as Edmonton saw the development of technical and vocational schools, some private business colleges and schools and adult supervised youth organizations. Organized professional sports teams and events became an increasingly common phenomenon[32] and a growing number of commercial forms of entertainment could also be found in the city, a fact which led many adults to decry the influence of dance halls and movie theatres on the young. In 1922 radio broadcasting arrived in Edmonton and by 1931 5,717 households had radios.[33] Indeed, though Edmonton was only a small western Canadian city, it replicated many, if not most, of the educational and recreational opportunities available to teen-agers in the larger cities of North America. Similarly, there was a fairly standard array of social service agencies designed to deal with the problems of juvenile delinquency including a juvenile court system.

In the following chapters, various facets of the teen-age experience will be examined in more depth. Teen-age participation in the urban labour market will be

explored, the changing nature of schooling will be described and the definition and treatment of deviant behaviour will be delineated. By analysing these inter-related aspects of teen-aged life, it should then be possible to come to some understanding of what it meant to be a young person in Edmonton in the 1920s.

FOOTNOTES

[1]One of the classic statements on "youth as class" is expressed in John and Margaret Rowntree, "The Political Economy of Youth," *Our Generation* 6 (1966): 155-190. David M. Smith, "New Movements in the Sociology of Youth: A Critique," *British Journal of Sociology* 32 (June 1981): 239-251 is an excellent review of theoretical approaches to youth. See also, David M. Smith, "The Concept of Youth Culture: A Reevaluation," *Youth and Society* 7 (June 1976): 347-366; Mike Brake, *The Sociology of Youth Culture and Youth Subcultures* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1980); Stuart Hall and Tony Jefferson, eds., *Resistance through Rituals: Youth Subcultures in post-war Britain* (London: Hutchinson, 1976).

[2]The debates about youth in this area are not unlike the debates about women's relationship to society. In the case of youth the questions revolve around whether age identification surpasses race or class as a primary determinant of social relations and experience whereas in the case of women it is a question of whether gender is a more primary division than class or race. For an interesting discussion of these issues which looks at gender, age and class see June Purvis, "Towards a History of Women's Education in Nineteenth-Century Britain: A Sociological Analysis" in *Achievement and Inequality in Education*, ed. June Purvis and Margaret Hales (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1983),pp.153-192. See also Angela McRobbie and Mica Nava, eds., *Gender and Generation* (London: Macmillan Publishers, 1984).

[3]J.M.S. Careless, "Aspects of Urban Life in the West, 1870-1914," in *The Canadian City: Essays in Urban History*, ed. Gilbert A. Stelter and Alan F. J. Artibise (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1977), pp.125-141.

[4]J. R. MacGregor, *Edmonton: A History* (Edmonton: Hurtig Publishers, 1967), pp.225-226.

[5]Ibid., pp. 227-240.

[6]Paul Voisey, "The Urbanization of the Canadian Prairies 1871-1916," *Histoire Sociale/Social History* 8 (May 1975): 77-101.

[7]David Leadbeater, "The Development of Capitalism in the Area Currently Called Alberta" (M. A. thesis, University of Alberta, 1980).

[8]Carl Betke, "The Development of Urban Community in Prairie Canada: Edmonton, 1898-1921" (Ph.D. thesis, University of Alberta, 1981); Carl Betke, "The Original City of Edmonton: A Derivative Prairie Urban Community," in *Town and City: Aspects of Western Canadian Urban Development*, ed. Alan F. J.

Artibise (Regina: University of Regina Canadian Plains Research Center, 1981), pp.309-345.

[9]Betke, "The Development of Urban Community," p. 453 notes that the elite was 4/10 Presbyterian, 1/5 Methodist and 1/4 Anglican.

[10]The *Census of Canada*, 1931, Vol.II, pp.698-99 reveals that of a total population of 79,197, 14,717 were Roman Catholics, 17,728 were Anglicans, 18,374 were United Church, 12,326 were Presbyterians, 4,926 were Baptists, 4,107 were Lutherans, 1,861 were Greek Orthodox and 1,045 were Jews.

[11]Gerald Friesen, *The Canadian Prairies*, pp.284-286; Michael J. Doucet, "Working Class Housing in a Small Nineteenth Century Canadian City: Hamilton, Ontario 1852-1881," in *Essays in Canadian Working Class History*, ed. Gregory S. Kealey and Peter Warrian (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1976), pp. 83-105; Ian Davey and Michael Doucet, "Appendix One:The Social Geography of a Commercial City, ca. 1853," in *The People of Hamilton, Canada West: Family and Class in a Mid-Nineteenth-Century City*, Michael B. Katz (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1975), pp.319-342.

[12]Betke, "The Development of Urban Community," p.453.

[13]Ibid., pp.505-506; Alvin Finkel,"The Rise and Fall of the Labour Party in Alberta, 1917-42," *Labour/Le Travail* 16 (Fall 1985): 61-96.

[14]Betke, "The Development of Urban Community".

[15]Friesen, *The Canadian Prairies*, pp. 288-292.

[16]Gilpin, *Edmonton*, pp.138-139.

[17]*Census of Canada*, 1921, Vol. III, p.88; *Census of Canada, 1931*, Vol. V, p.1246. The sexist terminology of the Census is retained for historical accuracy.

[18]*Census of Canada, 1921*, Vol. III, pp. 148 and 152.

[19]*Census of Canada, 1931*, Vol. V, pp.4-5.

[20]*Census of Canada, 1921*, Vol.III, p.57.

[21]Ibid., pp.66-67.

[22]*Census of Canada, 1931*, Vol. V, p.831.

[23]See *Census of Canada, 1921*, Vol. III and *Census of Canada, 1931*, Vol. V.

[24]*Census of Canada*, 1931, Vol. V.

[25]Kett, *Rites of Passage*; Gillis, *Youth and History*.

[26]*Census of the Prairie Provinces, 1926*, p.622.

[27]*Census of Canada, 1931*, Vol. II, p. 157.

[28]On drifting single men see, for example, Stuart Marshall Jamieson, *Times of Trouble: Labour Unrest and Industrial Conflict in Canada, 1900-66* (Ottawa: n.p., 1968), p.235; H.M. Cassidy, "Relief and Other Social Services for Transients," in *Canada's Unemployment Problem* (Toronto: The Macmillan Company of Canada Limited, 1939), pp.172-221. On rural girls in the city see, for example, Alberta, Department of Neglected Children, *Annual Report, 1912* and *Annual Report, 1918*.

[29]*Census of Canada, 1921* and *Census of Canada, 1931*.

[30]See, Cecil L. Race, "Compulsory Schooling in Alberta (1888-1942)" (M.Ed. thesis, University of Alberta, 1978).

[31]*Census of Canada, 1921* and *Census of Canada, 1931*.

[32]Carl F. Betke, "The Social Significance of Sport in the City: Edmonton in the 1920s," in *Cities in the West*, ed. A. Ross McCormack and Ian MacPherson (Ottawa: National Museum of Man, 1975), pp.211-235.

[33]*Census of Canada*, 1931, Vol. V, p.989.

CHAPTER THREE

TEEN-AGERS IN THE LABOUR MARKET

On January 31, 1935 Alice B.[1] died in Edmonton's Misericordia Hospital, the victim of a botched abortion. Her tragic story, which can be told in more detail than most because it was thoroughly documented in a surviving police report of her death, is representative of the experiences of large numbers of young, single working women in Edmonton throughout the two decades after World War I.[2] The re-creation of Alice's short working life is also important, not only because in many aspects it is generalizable, but also because, through it, we can exercise our historical imagination and develop a sense of feeling and knowing about what the raw data on issues such as wage rates, unemployment and housing shortages meant for individuals. And, while most of the existing evidence on the employment experiences of the young focusses on women because they, like children, were seen as dependent and in need of legal protection, some conclusions can also be drawn about young working men, particularly when their lives touched the lives of their female counter-parts.

Two years before her death, Alice B. left the small town of Gunn, Alberta for the big city. Like many young people before and since, she came to Edmonton in search of work which she found as a waitress at the Adelphi Cafe. Her occupation was not untypical for most young working women were employed in the service, domestic or clerical sectors of the economy and they were paid minimal wages—somewhere between about $6.00 to $9.00 per week at a time when it was estimated that as much as $7.50 per week was needed for room and board alone.[3] Eunice Whidden, General Secretary of the Young Women's Christian Association, had

noted that low wages forced working girls to live in small, shabby rooms in poor neighbourhoods and to go without sufficient food for their nutritional requirements.[4] Whether Alice was actually under-nourished is impossible to tell and she may well have received a free meal at work, but her living conditions fit Whidden's description. Alice lived in one room in a commerical rooming house in a "rougher" part of town and she shared that room with a friend, Jo. Most aspects of their domestic lives were lived within that one room.

Jo and Alice appear to have had a firm friendship and a network of other friends, both male and female. In addition, Alice's sister, Mabel, had followed Alice to the city and visited her frequently. Alice had easy access to an old family friend, a Mrs. White, from whom she sought advice, comfort and presumably an occasional meal. Alice also had a boyfriend, Bill, and like many young women probably expected matrimony to rescue her from menial paid labour at some stage of her life.

All in all, Alice B. appears to have been quite happy with her life—she had a job at a time when many were unemployed and destitute, she had a place to live and friends and family with whom to enjoy some good times. But good times were her downfall—just as the middle class social reformers had warned girls they would be.

On Hallowe'en night, Alice and a group of friends gathered for a few drinks prior to departing for a dance at the Shasta Cafe and Alice became intoxicated. She left the drinking party to call on a Rudy A., a tailor employed at Dittrich's, to ask him to join her group but he refused. Jo and her boyfriend, concerned about Alice's condition, found her in Rudy's room and deeming Alice too drunk to attend the dance, they put her to bed there and left her "to sleep it off". Later that night, Henry G., a barber and Rudy's room-mate, returned to his room to find Alice in bed. Henry claimed that he went downstairs to the barbershop to sleep in a chair

but Alice confided to her friend, Jo, that Henry came to bed with her and that she was too drunk and sleepy to resist his sexual advances, sexual advances which then may have recurred on two subsequent occasions.

By Christmas Alice knew she was pregnant and turned to Jo to discuss solutions to the "problem". Jo's initial reaction was to tell Alice that all she could do was have the baby but Alice did not wish to do so and attempted to abort through the drinking of hard liquor and turpentine and the taking of hot baths—traditional methods of abortion known by most women and spread by word-of-mouth. By January Alice was desperate for the home remedies had not worked and she told a co-worker, Edna S., that "she did not care what she had to go through as long as she got it over with." As it turned out, both Edna and Jo had been "in the family way" and through a taxi-driver had learned of the existence of Mrs. P. of North Edmonton, a woman who had been trained as a nurse in Brussels and now performed abortions. Edna and Jo told Alice about Mrs. P. and, though they both warned her of the dangers, particularly since their friend was now at least three months pregnant, Alice undertook to engage the services of Mrs. P. After several unsuccessful attempts to induce a miscarriage through douches of Lifebuoy soap and Lysol in solution, an instrument was used and Alice aborted.

In the meantime, Jo had approached Henry G. demanding that he provide financial assistance to Alice but he denied responsibility and claimed to have no money. Alice managed on her own to pay $5.00 (nearly a week's wage) though Mrs. P. later denied charging girls and said she only expected them to give what they could. Indeed, Mrs. P. told police that she only "did these operations because times were hard" thus indicating that she felt that she was providing a necessary medical service for women.

After the abortion, Alice returned to her room where she began to haemorrhage and the next day Jo called in a doctor who rushed Alice to hospital where she soon died, her father at her bedside.

Before her sad end, the life of Alice B. had been somewhat more favourable than that of another Alice who was known only as Miss X to newspaper readers who learned of her existence when she was arrested on charges of vagrancy in 1929. At the age of 14, Miss X had left her home in rural Alberta accompanied by her mother who helped her settle in Edmonton. The only employment she had been able to secure was part-time work in the cafeteria of Ramsey's Department Store, second only in size to the Hudson's Bay Store. The $7.50 per week she eaned there was not enough to pay for her room and board, let alone buy clothes or anything else. And, unlike Alice B., she had no relatives or family friends to turn to for solace. She took to wandering the streets as the only form of recreation available to a poor and lonely girl and, through idle conversation on the street, soon fell in with a taxi-driver. She began to share lodgings with him and he asked her to "hustle for him" though she claimed that she "didn't really know what it meant then." In the course of several months and some rather sordid experiences, Miss X moved or was traded from pimp to pimp. These men fed, clothed and sheltered her and to some extent, at least, met her emotional needs. By the time of her arrest, she had joined forces with a young man who was literally in the process of taking her to his home town where they were to be married. Thus, over a period of a few short months, Miss X experienced the three options identified by Ruth Rosen as most often available to poor working women—low-paying, unskilled menial work, prostitution and marriage.[5]

Miss X's case was not exceptional. Other young girls who had migrated to the city or lived away from their parents in the city often found themselves in trying circumstances. One young girl, picked up as part of the vice-ring clean-up

campaign that followed Miss X's arrest, explained that she had absolutely no money, she could not find work of any kind and she felt she could not return home so in her desperation she simply approached a likely looking male prospect and asked him to look after her.[6] While Alice B. died young, at least in life she had reasonably steady work, a place to stay and a support network of friends and family. Less fortunate young women were forced to turn to prostitution either to supplement their incomes or to earn any income at all. Still others, though not resorting to prostitution *per se* exchanged sexual favours and probably housekeeping skills for food and lodging. The plight of these destitute girls who often found themselves pregnant and deserted is well-expressed in the testimony of one.

> Some may know how hard it is to get work of any kind in the winter, so when one has tramped the streets for three weeks in summer shoes, and only one meal a day to save the little one you have...You who have husbands and children and everything to make life worthwhile do not often think of the things that many of us have to go through even in this city of Edmonton. We have not the talent, nor the education that some of your children have, and I am one of those who do not have that opportunity.[7]

Of course, not all teen-aged girls were destitute nor were they all forced to turn to prostitution to survive. Of the cases discussed above, Alice B.'s employment history is probably the most common for many young working girls managed to eke out an existence and maintain some measure of happiness through their social networks. And those who were willing or able to live at home, contributing only part of their pay package to family maintenance, were, by most accounts, better off than the totally self-supporting girls. This was particularly true with respect to the matter of accommodation for reports indicate a distinct shortage of places for girls to stay. A Y.W.C.A. survey in 1929 revealed that there were only 209 rooms in established institutions and fifty in private homes for females to rent. The shortage of suitable housing was, however, laid at the door of low wages for if girls had been able to pay more than $7.50 a week for room and board more housewives would

have made rooms available claimed Eunice Whidden, General Secretary of the Y.W.C.A.[8]

How young men managed we can only guess though, in general, they earned somewhat more than young women while sharing in some aspects of their life-style such as living with a friend in one room. Evidence of male prostitution cannot be found though it may well have existed but young men did sometimes turn to criminal activities such as robbery to subsist.[9] Needless to say, young men did not have to cope directly with unwanted pregnancies or with the same kinds of sexual violence that faced young women.

While young men may have had a somewhat better time in life, all working teen-agers faced the harsh realities of the labour market at an early age. They did not experience the "invented" adolescence of which historians speak; they did not have a prolonged, dependent and protected childhood.

Patterns of employment for the working teen-agers of Edmonton in the 1920s and early 30s resemble those found in the United States, Britain and elsewhere in Canada.[10] In 1921, 80% of the employed young men found jobs in the manufacturing, transportation, trade, service and clerical sectors of the economy. Ten years later these were still high employment areas for boys along with an additional area termed "other" which covered labourers and unskilled workers. Within these broad occupational groupings, youths tended to be restricted to the lowest levels of work as labourers, messengers, deliverymen, truck drivers or teamsters, salesmen, bookkeepers and office clerks, confirming Osterman's observation that the broad occupational categories used by statisticians can be misleading and must be used cautiously.[11] Of the 1,021 young men nineteen years of age or younger working in Edmonton in 1921, 58% were engaged in the specific jobs listed above. In 1931, of the 1,197 young men in the same age group, 64% were similarly engaged.

Job opportunities for young females were even more narrow than those for young males. In 1921, 98% of the 935 employed young women were found in manufacturing, trade, service and clerical sectors. By 1931, few of the 1,235 employed girls were in manufacturing and 940 (or 76%) found work as domestics, waitresses, saleswomen, stenographers and typists.[12]

The 1931 Census provides information which allows for some comparisons of average earnings and average number of weeks worked for various age groups in the twelve month period prior to census day in 1921 and 1931. It must be emphasized that these are averages only. Some young people would be earning more or working for longer periods; others, of course, would have earned less or been employed for fewer weeks in the year. With few exceptions, the young on average had less job security and lower wages than the rest of the working population.[13] Between 1921 and 1931 their situation worsened and they experienced a drop both in wages and in time worked. This was part of a decrease felt by all workers but for the young whose earnings were low to begin with, this decline must have been particularly difficult to manage, especially for those who were trying to lead lives independently of their families. Young females were doubly disadvantaged, by their age and their gender, and received the lowest average income of all, even in cases where the young women were employed for more weeks in the year than the young men. (See Table 3)

TABLE 3

AVERAGE WAGES AND WEEKS OF WORK FOR EDMONTON'S TEEN-AGERS

1920-1921 AND 1930-1931

Age	Average *Annual Earnings*		Average No. of *Weeks Employed*		Average Wage *Per Week*	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
1 June 1920 - 1 June 1921						
10-14	368	190	45.92	43.40	8.00	4.38
15-19	665	549	46.95	47.83	14.17	11.47
All Ages	1311	769	47.67	49.17	27.50	15.65
1 June 1930 - 1 June 1931						
10-15	152	105	43.67	42.76	3.47	2.45
16-17	331	258	39.59	42.54	8.37	6.06
18-19	491	403	39.48	44.90	12.43	8.98
All Ages	1097	641	40.42	46.69	27.14	13.73

Source: *Census of Canada, 1931*

As might be expected, certain areas of employment offered more weeks of work and better wages than others. For example, in 1921 girls of 15 to 19 earned average annual salaries which ranged from $273.13 for domestic servants to $703.38 for clerks in private business and $797.24 for government clerks. Girls in manufacturing earned $493.54, waitresses made $519.97 and saleswomen $542.19. Boys could expect to earn $793.68 as railway labourers (but up to one-third less as

labourers in other areas), $748.21 as clerks, $657.82 as salesmen, $621.18 in manufacturing, $547.08 as teamsters or truck-drivers and $523.77 as messengers or office boys. By 1931, salaries had dropped substantially. Girls 17 and under earned $136.36 as domestic servants, $280.00 as waitresses, $358.14 as saleswomen and $375.00 as stenographers and typists. Their older counterparts in the 18 to 19 age bracket earned $194.53, $365.38, $471.43 and $572.37 respectively. Boys 17 and under were paid $201.59 as labourers, $328.05 as messengers, $347.06 as salemen and $475.00 as clerks while their older brothers of 18 and 19 earned $297.54, $452.94, $502.25 and $651.18 for similar work.

While a decrease in weekly wages accounts for part of the drop in average annual incomes, young people also found themselves employed for fewer weeks during the year. For female office workers and saleswomen and for male labourers and salesmen, the drop in weeks at work was particularly large. For example, in 1931 female stenographers and typists 17 and under worked an average of 38.00 weeks while the 18 and 19 year olds worked 44.75 weeks. In 1921, however, the 15 to 19 year old clerks had had an average of 49.00 weeks of work. Salesmen of 15 to 19 in 1921 worked for 49.32 weeks of the year but in 1931 found employment for only 43.97 weeks if they were 17 or under or 41.90 weeks if they were 18 or 19. Young labourers in 1931 found work on the average less than half the weeks of the year.[14]

It must be recognized that 1921 and 1931 were both bad years in Edmonton economically speaking and thus these statistics may not correctly reflect the earnings and weeks of work achieved through the decade. In addition, flat rates of pay need to be measured against the cost of living to provide a more accurate picture of the increase or decrease in the standard of living experienced by the young workers. Unfortunately hard data on youth wages through the 1920s are difficult to find though it is unlikely that young people ever earned the same amount of money as

older workers. Furthermore, current
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Michiel Horn's observation tha
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observation that "the Twenties had not roared" for more than
eople who were "never anything but poor between the
935 conclusion of The League for Social Reconstruction that
an families in 1930, and probably in 1929, lived "below the
t livelihood."[17] That this family poverty had direct adverse
nd their job opportunities was clear.

Bolton, a statistician with the Department of Labour in
before the Select Standing Committee on Industrial and
in 1926 which specifically mentioned the ill-effects of
trition on school performance and commented on the
of the poor to leave school early to supplement family
uded that this led the young into "blind-alley occupations"
promised low wages, no job security and little chance for
nent.[18]

m Edmonton supports Bolton's analysis. The young entering
d that some jobs demanded more skill or education than
better paying areas such as stenography or bookkeeping, for
horthand and accounting were needed but acquiring these
eriods of training. Thus families had to be able to afford to
f the labour market to attend school. That this was often
Thompson of the Edmonton Local of the Grand Trunk Pacific
before the Royal Commission on Industrial Relations and
n should get the best education provided by the state. But he

claimed that because of the high cost of living and the small size of his pay packet, he was unable to provide his children with the training he wanted them to have.[19]

Further substance is given to Thompson's observations when census data on child contributions to family income are examined. (See Table 4)

In 1921, 10.77% of the total income of reporting families was accounted for through the earnings of children while in 1931 children's earnings supplied 9.76% of total family income. Heads of families employed in some occupational groups were more dependent on their children's earnings than others. On the whole, male heads of family employed in unskilled or semi-skilled work or in jobs vulnerable to seasonal fluctuation relied more on help from their children.[20]

It is also important to take account of the fact that the census recognizes that some young people, while not earning income, were "gainfully employed" in materially helping their parents with work (other than housework) at home or in their places of business. While not actually earning income, these young people made a direct contribution to the family economy as did the young who worked before or after school hours, on week- ends or during vacation breaks. The Census takes no account of the work of truant children, many of whom were kept at home to work or deliver messages as the need arose. Even young people who spent the major portion of their time at home in the full- time performance of household duties were specifically excluded from the census definition of the "gainfully employed" yet all these children sacrificed schooling to help out their families.

TABLE 4

CHILDREN'S EARNINGS AS A PER CENT OF TOTAL FAMILY EARNINGS

EDMONTON, 1921 AND 1931

Occupation Area of Male Head	*Children's Earnings as % of Family Earnings*	
	1921[a]	*1931*
All Occupations	10.77	9.76
Agriculture	12.52	19.16
Logging, Fishing, Trapping	21.31	—[b]
Mining and Quarrying	11.81	17.31
Manufacturing	11.07	9.59
Construction	13.57	16.38
Transportation	6.74	8.32
Trade	7.24	7.14
Finance	2.86	5.65
Service	9.90	7.98
Clerical Occupations	7.58	11.19
Labourers	16.54	17.37

Sources: *Census of Canada, 1921 and 1931.*

a. Family income does not include earnings of wives in 1921.

b. Not given.

It is possible to make some reckoning of the extent to which young people were neither in school nor employed. The data in the 1921 Census indicates that in that year 669 young people between the ages of 7 and 14 were not at school and an

additional 256 attended school less than full-time. Since only 22 were listed as "gainfully employed" (i.e. either earning wages or helping in a family business), the whereabouts and activities of 903 must be explained. Some of this number likely did not attend school because of illness or other infirmities. But at least 98 were caught working illegally according to the monthly reports of George Donnolly, Edmonton's attendance officer. Donnolly also granted exemptions from school attendance to thirteen other youngsters under the provisions of *The School Attendance Act* although if these exemptions followed the letter of the law they would only have excused children from school for six weeks during the term.[21] Of the remainder, perhaps many of them were working undetected in the street trades or in home industries.[22] Significantly, by 1931, a much smaller group of 176 children 14 and under were not in school although an additional 77 attended less than full-time.

The figures for the older age group of teen-agers are more startling. In 1921, 606 or 13.00% were neither in school or gainfully employed and in 1931, 1.030 or 12.22% were in the same situation. Again, we can only speculate about the activities of those young people who were neither employed nor at school. In fact, many of them were probably unemployed. As Marsh has pointed out, "there is a large potential supply of juvenile labour which does not become recorded in wage-earner statistics unless the individuals who compose it have each found at least one job."[23] That is, until young people found and lost their first job, they did not become part of the unemployment statistics.

Two other facts complicate our ability to calculate youth employment and unemployment rates. Unemployed young men who drifted out of the city in search of work would not be counted and yet "drifting" appears to have been a common occurrence.[24] Unemployed young women who remained in their family homes and were engaged full-time in the performance of household duties were not recognized

as "gainfully employed". This would also apply to the 145 girls in 1921 and the 201 in 1931 who were married while still in their teens if they worked only in the home. It is impossible to tell whether these women were at home simply because they could not find paid work.[25]

A true calculation of youth unemployment rates is also made difficult by the very real possibility that many young persons, if they or their families could afford it, stayed on in school simply because they could not secure employment. Anecdotal evidence to this effect is provided by high school inspectors who several times commented on the direct relationship they perceived between economic stagnation and increasing enrollments in the high schools.[26]

That youth unemployment was becoming an issue of public concern in Canada, however, appears certain. In 1920 the federal government established a juvenile division within the Employment Service of Canada to replace the informal and "inefficient" methods by which work had been found by the young previously.[27] Alberta quickly followed up on the federal lead by establishing a Juvenile Department as part of the Alberta Government Employment Bureau.[28]

An article in *The Labour Gazette* explained the intended aims and methods of the Juvenile Employment Service. First of all, young people not judged ready for employment were to be referred back to the school system. Prospective workers, however, were to have their physical, mental and social records examined so that a placement officer could discover their special abilities and interests and thus match them to the proper positions in industry. Finally, the Juvenile Service was supposed to do follow-up work with young workers to assist the young in taking advantage of educational resources and recreational facilties in the community so that they might "develop greater efficiency" in their work. This benevolent care was to continue until young workers could "mark out" their own progress for themselves.[29]

In order to carry out this work, juvenile employment agents were to visit each child's home to see if work was a necessity, they were to talk to school officials, youth club leaders, medical people, local librarians and any other adults who might provide useful placement information and they were to examine all records on the individual that could be found. Once work had been secured, agents were to encourage individuals to "stick to the job", to become mature and stable workers.

In practice, in Alberta at least, the Juvenile Department was far from the ideal outlined by the federal agency because financial constraints prevented the development of a well-staffed and separate unit devoted to youth employment.[30] Juvenile work in Alberta was done by people already working in the Employment Service and the director did not argue for the need to hire extra staff for youth work.[31] Simple, straightforward procedures were established to carry on the juvenile work. School principals were asked to advise the nearest Employment Bureau about the school leaving dates of students. The Bureau then wrote to the parents or guardians offering its sevices and asking for an interview to determine what occupation the youth would like to take up. The Bureau also provided information from its files on job openings but simply did not have the resources to engage in more sophisticated placement or follow-up work.

To some extent, too, the work of the Juvenile Department was hampered by the lack of co-operation from school officials who often neglected to pass on the names of school leavers. Perhaps principals, inspectors and superintendents lacked confidence in the ability of the Employment Service to place young people and continued to hope that more traditional methods of job-seeking would suffice. Certainly young people continued to find work through their parents, relatives or friends, through private employment agencies, through informal job registries such as the one for office workers at the United Typewriter Company, through the classified advertisements in local newspapers and through the very common method

of "making the rounds".[32]

It seems clear, however, that unemployment and underemployment plagued young people in Edmonton throughout the 1920s. By 1929, a survey conducted by the Y.W.C.A. concluded that there were simply not enough jobs for all the girls wanting to work.[33] A report from the Alberta Employment Service covering the same year noted that even in the unpopular field of domestic service there were more applicants than vacancies, a strong comment on the very low level of opportunities for young women since domestic service in Canada was generally an area where demand exceeded supply.[34]

If it was difficult to find employment in 1929, it must have been increasingly difficult to find work as the Depression deepened. In 1930, the files of the United Typewriter Company, the unofficial job registry for stenographers, revealed that at least 100 young, inexperienced girls were looking for work.[35] A survey of office workers conducted by the Canadian Business Women's Club quoted a "reliable" clerk in a department store who said that many girls were in "straitened" circumstances despite living at home since the male breadwinners were unemployed. As a result, the Retail Clerks' Association estimated that 400 girls were looking for jobs. By 1931, when the Y.W.C.A. started registering unemployed girls, more than 100 registered on the first day.[36] We can only imagine the despair and desperation these figures hide.

Young men likely found themselves similarly without work. The 1929 report of the Alberta Employment Service noted that labourers, an occupation attracting large numbers of young men, had had a poor year because machines were beginning to replace men in the construction field. On top of that, crops had been poor and few farm jobs were available outside the city.[37] One of the few remaining card files on job-seekers registered with the Alberta Employment Services notes that one 19 year-old labourer returned many times to the office seeking employment and was

eventually able to find work as a truck driver.[38] How many other young lads joined him in this routine we can not tell.

Historians of youth have commented on the impact that mechanization had on the sectors of the economy that employed large numbers of young people.[39] The replacement of labourers by machines would be part of this phenomenon but William Carnill of the Alberta Employment Service also blamed mechanization for the declining number of jobs for young women in domestic service. He claimed that "modern equipment is now making it possible for a number of housewives to carry on with the occasional help of a charwoman, where formerly these housewives used to engage domestics permanently."[40] In domestic service, as elsewhere, part-time work was becoming important.

While part-time work benefitted employers, it created serious problems for employees. And, as the Royal Commission on Price Spreads and Mass buying demonstrated, there was a great deal of evidence to suggest that chain stores were making large use of part-time help in order to avoid paying employees the legislated weekly minimum wage.[41] The case of Miss X, discussed above, is a case in point. The court hearing the charges against her learned that she had been paid $7.50 a week, a sum considerably below the minimum wage in Alberta at the time. That she had been paid below the minimum wage was denied by J.H. Ashcraft, the former manager of the department store where Miss X had worked. He explained that she had only worked part-time in the cafeteria and hence had been paid on a pro-rated basis.[42]

Part-time work of another sort was experienced by girls employed in the Millinery Work Room of the Hudson's Bay Store. Their work was divided into two seasons each year, the first lasting from February 15th to June 15th and the second from August 15th to December 15th. This meant that each year they faced two periods of lay-off which amounted to a total of four months out of each twelve yet

their weekly salaries were no larger than those earned by employees who had work for the full twelve months.[43] Because there was no Unemployment Insurance, these young women would have either have to save money from an all-too- meagre weekly pay packet to tide them over periods of lay-off or they would have to seek temporary work in an already glutted labour market.

Whether the source of inadequate wages lay with low rates, part-time work or periods of unemployment, the impact of small incomes on the lives of young working women was, as we have seen, enormous. This fact was further emphasized during the debate on the minimum wage in Alberta.

Alberta began experimenting with a form of the minumum wage as early as 1917 when *The Factories Act* was passed.[44] This act specified that any person employed in a factory, shop or office be paid at least $1.50 per shift. The rate could be lowered to $1.00 for apprentices, however. In 1920 the legislation was amended to allow for the setting up of an advisory committee which would deal with wages and hours of work for women and young people. An official Minimum Wage Board was established in 1922 with the passage of *The Minimum Wage Act*, an act designed to provide a minimum wage for women.[45]

Initially the board established a minimum wage of $14.00 per week with lower minima for apprentices or "learners" in their first year of employment. In order to arrive at this rate, the board had examined actual and estimated annual budgets of working girls. While elements of the business community later accused some board members of "fixing" the budgets to account for the rate they wanted to set,[46] an actual diary for a nine-month period in 1922 shows that a weekly salary of $14.00 would not have been unreasonable.[47] Of the $762.55 spent by this young woman over the nine months, the largest expenditures were for room and board and clothing. She also sent $196.70 home to her family. Even if we consider this last amount an unnecessary draw on her income, we find that $14.51 per week was

needed to meet this budget. With the inclusion of a payment to the family, the weekly rate would go up to $19.55, a figure very close to the $20.00 per week base rate suggested by the Employed Girls' Council of Regina and adopted by the Women's Labour Conference held in Edmonton in 1929.[48]

Few young women under 20 received anything like $14.00 per week or even the $12.50 minimum that was in the end set for female employees in manufacturing plants, shops, stores and mail order houses.[49] This was especially true for girls just starting out in a job who became the victims of a strong business lobby to deny them full wages because of their status as novices. For example, the Employers' Association of Alberta indicated quite strongly that young people between the ages of 15 and 18 would find themselves without work or would never be able to get work if the government forced businesses to pay the minimum wage to beginners.[50] That the Employers' Association won the battle is confirmed by Walter Smitten, the Commissioner of Labor, who wrote in 1929, that the board "recognized that during the period of learning it was absolutely impossible to fix a rate that would provide full maintenance for a self-supporting girl."[51] How, then, was such a girl to live wondered the local members of the Canadian Brotherhood of Railroad Employees if she had to pay for room and board and "dress, decent, to have work at all". It would be unfortunate, they suggested, if girls felt "compelled by force of circumstances, to take a step that is neither a credit to themselves, nor the City."[52] As we have seen, some girls felt so compelled.

Other union people claimed that employers used various devices to escape paying the minimum wage. For example, Walter Smitten, who was an active trade unionist in Edmonton before he became Alberta's Commissioner of Labor, noted as early as 1919 that the provision in *The Factories Act* which specified a minimum wage for apprentices and learners of $1.00 per shift was easily broken. Employers would pay the apprentice the $6.00 weekly wage as required but then withhold as

much as $4.00 for "tuition fees", leaving a real wage of $2.00 for six days' work.[53] Department stores used another means to circumvent minimum wage regulations according to the *Alberta Labor News*. A girl would be hired on as an apprentice with one department in the store at $7.50 or $9.50 a week. At the end of the apprenticeship period, rather than receiving the full minimum wage, she would be transferred to another department to begin a new period of apprenticeship at the lower learners' rate. This problem was seen as particularly acute in larger stores with many departments for girls could thus spend several years working as apprentices for less than the minimum wage.[54]

Some substance is given to this claim by the very strong attack mounted by the Hudson's Bay Company against Alberta's minimum wage laws. The company stated that the twelve month learning period specified in the legislation was one in which it was "utterly impossible for any employee to become proficient in his or her duties in a department store."[55] While employees of small retail establishments sold merchandise, wrapped it and handled the cash, the "legitimate" retail department store found that this method was impractical and inefficient and so broke down the process into its parts. Hence some girls sold the goods, others wrapped and yet others handled the cash. Paradoxically, the company argued that it would take girls longer to learn these "skills" in the large department store where they were taught separately rather than together and urged the Minimum Wage Board to recognize this fact by granting such stores a three-year apprenticeship period rather than one.[56] Why a fractionalized or de-skilled labour process,[57] often designed precisely because it was quicker to learn and easier to control, should, in this case, take longer to learn is puzzling unless, of course, the real motivation was to get three years of cheap labour from young women instead of one. Indeed, the argument presented by P.J.(?) Parker, General Manager of the Hudson's Bay Company stores in Alberta, leads almost inescapably to that conclusion while, at the

same time, providing an interesting insight into the work lives of young female clerks in 1923 and 1924.[38]

According to Mr. Parker, most of the 130 cashiers, inspectors and checkers in the Calgary and Edmonton stores were 15, 16 or 17 years old and lived with their parents. In fact, personnel policy dictated that girls resident with their parents be hired on a preferential basis although if a store did hire a young person living alone, the Company assumed "a certain moral responsibility" to see that she conducted herself "in a proper manner". The girls hired were most often inexperienced in business matters and, in management's view, frequently had acquired "indifferent" educations.

To train these girls to be proficient and efficient salespeople took more than twelve months said Parker. Because of their lack of proper training or experience, they required constant supervision and could only be moved through the learning stages in a very gradual manner. For example, a new girl started out at the desk of an experienced inspector who showed her how to wrap and check merchandise and make change. An "alert" pupil was considered competent in these skills after five or six months and was then transferred to a busier section of the store and left alone. After this, she would be moved to several different departments to "broaden her experience" as an inspector or cashier and then "in the course of time" would receive a promotion to the rank of salesperson, another job which again took "a number of years" to learn even for the most eager student since a whole new series of stages had to be mastered. First, the trainee was placed at an aisle table selling one type of merchandise at one price. Once she could demonstrate competence in this task, she moved on to a full department where she became junior girl. If she applied herself "intelligently and enthusiastically to her duties" she could look forward to becoming "head of stock" or even "buyer".

Parker argued that a full three years were needed to teach young women to be good cashiers and inspectors and a further three years were necessary to train salespeople. By implication, then, this meant a six year learning period, a period Parker claimed should be recognized as a legitimate apprenticeship and hence subject to the lower apprentice pay and not the higher minimum wage. Of course, if 15, 16 and 17 year old girls needed to be trained for six years before they could receive the minimum wage, most of them would probably have left to get married before they were fully "trained" thereby saving the Hudson's Bay Company from ever having to pay full salaries. However, Parker did note that employees of unusual ability could earn more than the minimum at any level of training and that bonuses were paid to girls whose personal sales were much above the average since the company wished to retain the more productive members of staff.

It is much to the credit of the Alberta Government and the Minimum Wage Board that no changes of the sort asked for by the Hudson's Bay Company were made in the regulations. Accordingly young women should have received a weekly wage of $7.50, $9.00, $10.00 and $11.00 for the first, second, third and fourth quarter respectively of their learning year. After that, the wage was set at a minimum of $12.50 per week. Whether or not department stores or other businesses managed to circumvent these standards, as the *Alberta Labor News* claimed, is impossible to definitely establish.

An underlying assumption of the whole debate on the female minimum wage clearly was that women would always be paid less than men. This inequity was justified on the basis of an argument that held that women could live on less than men though, as Nellie McClung observed, "Even ladies must eat."[59] Interestingly enough, however, it appears that some businesses, on being forced to pay the established minimum wage to female employees, turned to hiring young men for less than they would have to pay young women. This necessitated an amendment to

The Factories Act which, in 1926, was revised to, among other things, change the clause which established a fixed rate for male employees to one which read "Wherever a minimum rate has been fixed for females it shall not be lawful to employ males at a lesser rate."[60]

Elements of the business community responded to this change in much the same way as they had to the minimum wage for women. For example, R.W. Pearson, manager of the National Trust Company, argued that this *de facto* minimum wage for boys meant that his organization could not afford to bring young boys into the office after they left school. This was

> ...due to the fact that help of this nature that has had no previous experience does not justify the payment of the amount of the minimum wage within the time allowed by the Act; in fact, for the first year or so, so much time has to be spent in giving them instruction and checking the work that they do that the value of their services is very little.[61]

Furthermore, Pearson claimed the company had had to discharge junior employees because their productivity did not justify the minimum wage.

In addition, Pearson was concerned about the psychological impact (though he did not phrase it that way) of the minimum wage. He noted that if young men got the minimum wage after one year, after two or three years they felt they should get a raise "whereas they are probably not sufficiently trained for two or three years to justify the payment of anything beyond the minimum wage."[62]

As a solution to this situation, Pearson suggested that businesses such as his be granted a blanket exemption from minimum wage regulations. He felt that this would be preferable to circumventing the Act by other means such as the establishment of a form of articling, a route taken by other firms.

Since *The Factories Act* of 1926 exempted "apprentices who have been duly indentured...or who are receiving proper instruction from the persons to whom they are apprenticed"[63] from minimum wage provisions in order to avoid contradicting

apprenticeship clauses in collective agreements, some companies used this loophole to set up specific articling or apprenticeship schemes of their own for young men. This allowed them to take advantage of the exemption to pay wages below the set minimum. In fact, the Commissioner of Labour[64], Walter Smitten, commended this approach to Pearson as the one he should take to solve his "problem".[65]

At first glance, it seems odd that the Commissioner of Labour, the man responsible for enforcing labour legislation on wages and a former trade unionist at that, would recommend a way to get around minimum wage legislation. It must be remembered, however, that apprenticeship was the traditional way of controlling and limiting entry to the trades. That is, this method was used by unions to control the supply of skilled workmen. If the supply was less than or about equal to the demand, higher wage rates could be secured and employment would be more steady. It was for this reason, too, that collective agreements specified the ratio of apprentices to journeymen or other regular workers. This also served to prevent employers from hiring large numbers of young male apprentices at the expense of older workers. In a sense, then, young men lucky enough to get apprenticeships were expected to suffer low wages in the short run in order, they hoped, to benefit in the long run.

One group of young men were particularly vulnerable to the scourge of low wages without any countervailing hope of a better future. Boys who left the city to work on farms found that they were without protection of any sort. The *Western Catholic* recounted the story of one young man who had worked on a farm for a month. Each day he worked from 6 A.M. until 10 P.M. or later milking cows, tending the cattle, ploughing and seeding. In return he received $10.00 and directions to the city. The editorial writer noted that minimum wage laws, the *Compensation Act* and the eight hour day applied to urban workers only and argued that it was time that the United Farmers government extended those protections to

all workers in the province so that young men would not be exploited as farm labourers.[66]

Domestic servants were another group of particularly vulnerable young workers who were not covered by labour legislation. During the debate on minimum wage legislation the House defeated a motion to include domestic servants under the provisions of the act. Irene Parlby argued that while she agreed "in spirit" that domestic workers should be covered, she felt that such a regulation would be impossible to enforce. A Labour M.L.A. from Medicine Hat, W.G. Johnston, said that the legislation was going far enough by protecting women who have to pay room and board.[67] Yet young women in domestic service had a very hard life, so hard that some of them ran away.[68] Wages were low, hours were very long and young women often worked in isolation and had few free evenings or week-ends. They had almost no freedom to pursue an independent life or interests of any sort. That a female employment officer could observe that the best maids are those girls "heading towards matrimony" is a telling comment on more than paid domestic service![69]

For those familiar with the ways in which historians have neglected both women and the young, the ironies of sources richer in material on young women's employment than young men's will not be lost. That we can know more about the qualitative experiences of young women is a reflection of society's double standard. When boys went to work, they embarked on their independent adult life. When girls went to work, it was viewed as an interregnum between school and their real life's work—marriage and motherhood. Thus there was at least an ideological urge to protect young employed women from "mortal sin and degradation", an urge which was often translated into specific and concrete reforms which undoubtedly made life better for working women and probably for working men.

In the end, however, the experiences of both young women and men reflected the realities of a capitalist market economy. Although in many respects they shared with their older comrades a first-hand knowledge of unemployment, menial work, job insecurity and poverty, the taint of their age and their status as beginners meant that they were even more vulnerable to exploitation than were their elders. Working teen-agers in Edmonton in the 1920s did not enjoy a "modern" adolescence marked by prolonged schooling and a lengthy dependence on their families. They were not protected from the adult world but, rather, entered that world early to face it on its own terms.

FOOTNOTES

[1]Only last initials of names are used to protect the identity of persons whose cases are used.

[2]City of Edmonton Archives (hereafter CEA), Commissioners' Files, Police and Crime, Acc.73-52, Box 195, "Special Report", City Police Department, 2 Feb. 1935. All information on this case is contained in this report which includes the testimony of most of the principal parties involved with Alice B.

[3]Provincial Archives of Alberta (hereafter PAA), Records of the Y.W.C.A., Acc. No. 68.301, Box 1, Item 12, Y.W.C.A. Clipping Book, "Edmonton Totally Unfitted to Meet Needs of Girl Worker", 12 March 1929.

[4]Ibid.

[5]Ruth Rosen, "Introduction," in *The Maimie Papers*, ed. Ruth Rosen and Sue Davidson (New York: The Feminist Press, 1977) and Ruth Rosen, *The Lost Sisterhood: Prostitution in America, 1900-1918* (Baltimore: John Hopkins, 1982).

[6]"Whirlwind Cleanup of Vice Rings...", *Edmonton Journal*, 1 February 1929; "Case for the Crown Tightened...", *Edmonton Journal*, 5 February 1929; "Four Convictions", *Edmonton Journal*, 6 February 1929; "New Drive Against Vice", *Edmonton Journal*, 7 February 1929. See also PAA, Alberta Provincial Police, Acc. No. 72.370, Item 12d, "A" Division Annual Report, 1929.

[7]PAA, Beulah Home Records, Acc No. 71.47, Box 1, File 1, 1925 Annual Report, "A Testimony of One of the Girls".

[8]PAA, Records of the Y.W.C.A., Acc. No. 68.301, Box 1, Item 12, Y.W.C.A. Clipping Book, "Edmonton Totally Unfitted to Meet Needs of Girl Worker", 12 March 1929.

[9]For discussion of aspects of "social" crime see Coulter, "'Not to Punish but to Reform'".

[10]Several studies on unemployment and related matters undertaken in the early decades of this century in Britain, the United States and Canada contain material on the young worker. There seems to have been a common concern in these countries about the relationship of early entry into the labour market and long term chronic unemployment. Another shared concern was the decline of apprenticeship and the need for technical education.

[11]Paul Osterman, *Getting Started: The Youth Labor Market* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1980).

[12]Based on the *Census of Canada, 1921*, Vol. III, Table 40 and *Census of Canada, 1931*, Vol. V, Table 36.

[13]The elderly, in some cases, did as badly as or worse than the young. The tendency for both the young and the old to experience low wages and high unemployment is noted in *Unemployment: Census of Canada Monograph*, 1931, Vol. XIII.

[14]In comparison, in 1921 male workers of 25-49 worked 47.86 weeks and earned $29.85 per week. Females 25-49 worked 49.58 weeks and earned $18.10 per week. In 1931, males 25-34 worked 37.93 weeks aat $23.71 and those 35-44 worked 41.95 weeks at $30.82. Women in similar age categories worked 47.81 weeks at $16.78 and 47.61 weeks at $18.97. *Census of Canada, 1931*, Vol. V, Tables 11 and 12.

[15]This is confirmed in John Herd Thompson with Allen Seager, *Canada 1922-1939: Decades of Discord* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1985).

[16]Michiel Horn, *The Dirty Thirties* (Toronto: Copp Clark Publishing, 1972), p.14.

[17]Research Committee, League for Social Reconstruction, *Social Planning for Canada* (Toronto: T. Nelson, 1935; reprint ed.,Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1975), p. 7.

[18]Canada, Select Standing Committee on Industrial and International Relations, *Minutes of Proceedings and Evidence, Session 1926* (Ottawa: King's Printer, 1926), pp.20-21.

[19]"Industrial Commission Receives Suggestions", *Edmonton Free Press*, 10 May 1919.

[20]In 1921 family incomes did not include the earnings of wives of male heads. Because children were grouped as "under 15" and "15 and over", some "children's earnings" may well come from those older than 19.

[21]Reports of the attendance officer, G. Donnolly, can be found throughout the minutes of the EPSB.

[22]See Minutes of the EPSB, 1921 and 1922. The Annual Reports of Alberta's Department of Neglected Children, 1909-1919 also provide hints about youth's involvement in the street trades and home industries. See, also, Canada, Department of Labour, *The Employment of Children and Young Persons in Canada* (Ottawa:

King's Printer, 1930), p.11.

[23]Leonard C. Marsh, *Canadians In and Out of Work* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1940), p. 310.

[24]This phenomenon has already been discussed in chapter two of this thesis.

[25]Canada, Department of Labour, *Employment of Children*, pp. 11-12; *Census of Canada, 1921*, Vol. IV, p. x.

[26]See, for example, Alberta, Department of Education, *Annual Report 1922; Annual Report 1930*, p.14; *Annual Report 1931*, p. 14. In Edmonton in 1926 45.74% of 15-19 year olds attended high school. By 1931 this figure was 56.52%.

[27]"Junior Employment Service in Canada", *The Labour Gazette*, December 1920, pp. 1613-1617.

[28]PAA, Alberta Sessional Papers, Acc. No. 70.414, Box 11, 1921 Sessional Paper No. 23, 2nd Annual Report, Alberta Government Employment Bureau.

[29]"Junior Employment Service", *Labour Gazette*.

[30]Indeed, the federal government allowed the Juvenile Employment Service to die, too.

[31]PAA, Alberta Sessional Papers, Acc. No. 70.414, Box 11, 1921 Sessional Paper No. 23, 2nd Annual Report, Alberta Government Employment Bureau.

[32]Leonard C. Marsh, *Employment Research* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1935), pp. 112-115; "Enquiry Made Into Unemployment Among Local Business Girls," *Alberta Labor News*, 18 October 1930.

[33]PAA, Records of the Y.W.C.A., Acc. No. 68.301, Box 1, Item 12, Y.W.C.A. Clipping Book, clipping dated 23 April 1929.

[34]PAA, Alberta Employment Service, Acc. No. 65.118, Box 40, File 346, W. Smitten to R.A. Rigg, no date, 1929. See, also, Marilyn Barber, "The Women Ontario Welcomed: Immigrant Domestics for Ontario Homes, 1870-1930" in *The Neglected Majority: Essays in Canadian Women's History, Volume Two*, ed. Alison Prentice and Susan Mann Trofimenkoff (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1985), pp. 102-121; Rebecca Coulter, "Young Women and Unemployment in the 1930s: The Home Service Solution," *Canadian Woman Studies/les cahiers de la femme* 7 (Winter, 1986): 77-80

[35]"Enquiry Made Into Unemployment Among Local Business Girls," *Alberta Labor News*, 18 October 1930.

[36]"The Alberta Labor Woman", *Alberta Labor News*, 3 October 1931.

[37]PAA, Alberta Employment Service, Acc. No. 65.118, Box 40, File 346, W. Smitten to R.A. Rigg, no date, 1929.

[38]PAA, Alberta Employment Service, Acc. No. 65.118, Box 49, S31.

[39]For a discussion of historical interpretations of the link between mechanization and job loss for the young see Osterman, *Getting Started*.

[40]PAA, Alberta Employment Service, Acc. No. 65.118, File 4, Wm. Carnill to H. Greenfield, 27 May 1930.

[41]Canada, Royal Commission on Price Spreads and Mass Buying, *Minutes of Proceedings and Evidence* Vol. III, (Ottawa: King's Printer, 1934).

[42]"Deny Statement on Store Wage," *Edmonton Journal*, 7 February 1929.

[43]PAA, Premiers' Papers, Acc. No. 69.289, File 505, P.J. (?) Parker to Premier H. Greenfield, 24 December 1924.

[44]Alberta, *An Act for the Protection of Persons Employed in Factories, Shops and Office Buildings*, 1917, 7 George V, c.20.

[45]Alberta, *An Act to Provide a Minimum Wage for Women* 1922, 12 George V, c.81.

[46]PAA, Premiers' Papers, Acc. No. 69.289, File 505, Brief from Committee of Alberta Employers, 5 March 1923.

[47]Examples of the budgets are found in PAA, Premiers' Papers, Acc. No. 69.289, File 505.

[48]"The Alberta Labor Woman," *Alberta Labor News*, 30 March 1929; "Women's Labour Conference, Edmonton," *The Labour Gazette*, April 1929, p. 407.

[49]Copies of The Minimum Wage Board Orders are found in PAA, Premiers' Papers, Acc. No. 69.289, File 505.

[50]PAA, Premiers' Papers, Acc. No. 69.289, File 505, Frank Ford to Government of Alberta, 28 March 1923.

[51]PAA, Premiers' Papers, Acc. No. 69.289, File 505, Walter Smitten to Premier J.E. Brownlee, 4 March 1929.

[52]PAA, Premiers' Papers, Acc. No. 69.289, File 505, J. Wintersgill to Edmonton City Council, 14 February 1929.

[53]"Factories Act Does Not Fulfil Requirements," *Edmonton Free Press*, 8 November 1919.

[54]"The Alberta Labor Woman," *Alberta Labor News*, 30 March 1929.

[55]PAA, Premiers' Papers, Acc. No. 69.289, File 505, P.J. Parker to Premier H. Greenfield, 24 December 1924.

[56]Ibid.

[57]See Harry Braverman, *Labor and Monopoly Capital* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1974) on fractionalization of retail labour.

[58]PAA, Premiers' Papers, Acc. No. 69.289, File 505, P.J. Parker to Premier H. Greenfield, 24 December 1924.

[59]"Labor Bureau, Highways Board and Minimum Wage...," *Edmonton Bulletin*, 17 February 1922.

[60]PAA, Premiers's Papers, Acc. No. 69.289, File 505, Smitten to Brownlee, 3 March 1931..

[61]Ibid., Pearson to Brownlee, 28 February 1931.

[62]Ibid.

[63]Ibid., Smitten to Brownlee, 3 March 1931.

[64]During the 1920s, Albertans seemed ambivalent about the question of how to spell "labour". Both the unions and the Government used the American spelling, "labor" during the early years of the decade but a shift to the British "labour" occurred later in the decade. I have used "labour" and "labor" as it was found in the records.

[65]PAA, Premiers' Papers, Acc. No. 69.289, File 505, Smitten to Brownlee, 3 March 1931.

[66]"A Minimum Wage", *Western Catholic*, 22 May 1924.

[67]"Stage Was All Set for Spirited Debate...," *Edmonton Bulletin*, 21 February 1922.

[68]See PAA, Alberta Provincial Police, Acc. No. 66.166, File 1300, Edmonton City Police Circulars.

[69]PAA, Alberta Employment Service, Acc. No. 65.118, Box 16, File 30, E.N. McKenzie, "Placing of Female Workers" in "Report of Minutes of Fifth Annual Western Conference Employment Service of Canada, March 6, 7 & 8, 1924 Edmonton, Alta."

CHAPTER FOUR

SCHOOLING TEEN-AGERS

Most historians have consistently posited the argument that the development of a modern concept of childhood is inextricably linked to the growth of schooling. Rooke and Schnell, for example, suggest that

> ...the establishment of systems of common schools can be usefully understood as efforts to impose a "childhood" on all children by forcing an extended period of psychological and economic dependence, insuring protection and segregation from the more questionable aspects of adult life, and granting delayed responsibility in social and ethical matters.[1]

The natural extension of this common interpretation is that the growth of secondary schooling is a significant indication of the development of the concept of adolescence for through the junior and senior high schools, children could be protected and kept dependent throughout their teen-age years. Indeed, Kett goes so far as to say "a youth who dropped out of high school ceased being an adolescent."[2] All this suggests, then, that the increased attendance at Edmonton's high schools during the 1920s would constitute strong evidence that growing numbers of teen- agers were experiencing a "modern" adolescence.

That attendance in grades nine through twelve, the high school classes in the 1920s, grew quite remarkably is clear. Though enrolments in the high schools fluctuated somewhat from month to month within each school year, the general trend was for young people to begin staying on for at least one or two more years after completion of grade eight, the final year of what was called public school. (See Table 5)

TABLE 5

ATTENDANCE IN EDMONTON'S PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOLS, 1920 TO 1925[a]

SCHOOL	1920	1921	1922	1923	1924	1925
Victoria	329	392	582	578	649	666
Strathcona	250	284	357	385	412	408
Technical	251	259	271	345	357	359
McDougall	334	385	351	393	427	446
TOTAL[b]	1164	1320	1561	1701	1845	1879

Source: Minutes of the Edmonton Public School Board, 1920-1925

[a] Enrolments are for month of November in each year since the Superintendent of Schools claimed enrolments reached their peak in that month. Comparable figures for Separate School Board could not be found.

[b] All grade nine enrolments will not be included in these figures since some classes were attached to public schools.

While the figures in Table 5 do not give the complete picture of high school attendance because enrolments for some grade nine classes in the public system, for the separate schools and private schools are not included, the general growth experienced by high schools is clear.

Between 1918 and 1923 high school enrolments in the public system more than doubled and the percentage of teen-agers aged 15-19 who stayed on in school increased from 42.88% in 1921 to 56.52% in 1931.[3] More detailed, though partial statistics, reveal that between September of 1920 and September of 1921 grade nine enrolments increased by 44.9% and grade twelve enrolments by 57.8%.[4] The following year grade twelve attendance increased again by 58.7%.[5]

In 1926 the Superintendent of Schools changed his methods of reporting enrolments but it is still obvious that high school attendance remained popular. (See Table 6)

TABLE 6

ATTENDANCE AT EDMONTON'S PUBLIC HICH SCHOOLS, 1926-1931

	Oct. 1926	Oct. 1927	Sept. 1928	Sept. 1929	Sept. 1930	Sept. 1930
High School (Academic)	2143	2380	2123	2476	—[a]	2982
Commercial	—[b]	—	429	520	—	714
Technical	361	280	307	278	—	416

Source: Minutes of the Edmonton Public School Board, 1926 to 1931.
[a] No figures for 1930 were found.
[b] Figures not given. May be included in High School figures for 1926 and 1927.

The growth of high school attendance created some interesting responses on the parts of parents, trustees and teachers, responses which reveal much about prevailing attitudes towards the young. To some extent, at least, these responses can be seen as class-conditioned. Nowhere is this more clear than in the 1923 debate on the future of grade twelve in the public school system.

With the rapid increases in enrolment after World War I, the public high schools experienced severe over-crowding in the classrooms. This pressure on the schools was coupled with an economic one resulting from the depressed conditions of the early 1920s and the Edmonton Public School Board trustees were left

searching for ways to resolve the dilemma between the need for more classroom space and the lack of revenue with which to erect new schools. At the board meeting of 1 March 1923, the decision was made to eliminate household science and manual arts from the high schools as a cost cutting measure. At the same meeting, on a motion from Dr. F.W. Crang, the board unanimously agreed to eliminate grade twelve from the high schools, as well, since students could enter the university after completing grade eleven. This motion was vigourously opposed by the superintendent who argued that the young students who enrolled in grade twelve needed the discipline and type of instruction given in high schools rather than what was offered at the university. Furthermore, he opined that the ten month term of the high school, rather than the six month one of the university, allowed students to get the more intensive form of instruction that a "child" of the average grade twelve age should have. He specifically noted that the "adult" associations of the university were not helpful to the immature student of high school age, thus indicating his feeling that teen-agers should be taught in age-segregated groups and protected from adult influences. In conclusion, the superintendent suggested that the public would support his view since enrolments in the grade twelve class at Strathcona High School were increasing even though its geographical proximity to the University of Alberta would make it easy for the young to attend university after the completion of grade eleven.[6]

The superintendent was correct in claiming that the public, more specifically certain elements of "the public", would support him. Within days of the passage of the motion to eliminate grade twelve from the high schools, a letter of protest from the Trades and Labor Council was received.[7] This letter was backed-up by the appearance of a delegation at the next board meeting where the case for keeping grade twelve in the high schools was forcefully put by J. W. Findlay and J. W. Heron on behalf of the Trades and Labor Council. Findlay argued that the

elimination of grade twelve was a "reactionary" move that would have serious consequences for the "rising generation". He suggested that the solution for economic ills was to be found not in curtailing education but in enhancing it. He was of the opinion that the saving effected by the elimination of grade twelve would not be that great but the the loss would be very heavy. Furthermore, "The twelfth grade is practically the workmen's university"[8] said Findlay. His arguments were seconded by Heron who added that it was easier for a "child" to get grade twelve in a high school than in university because teachers were more responsive than professors, this latter group leaving pupils to be responsible for their own advancement. In other words, high schools supervised the work of students more closely. Heron admitted that "economic conditions prevent most workmen's families from taking the twelfth grade, but the position is that they [the Trades and Labour Council] do not want them [workers' children] to be stunted if any of them get as far as that."[9]

From this and other evidence it is clear that organized labour saw schooling as valuable and viewed it as a right that should be available to all. Dr. Crang, in responding to the Trades and Labour Council delegation, revealed a somewhat different perspective. He observed that a grade eleven certificate allowed students to enter Normal School. When they had completed Normal School, they could go out to work and earn enough money to put themselves through university.[10] Findlay retorted that to get a First Class Certificate grade twelve was required and that without it, teachers were handicapped in job searches and pay.[11] Trustee S.A.G. Barnes offered the opinion that it would do a "child" good to spend a year at university, where he thought there was a different atmosphere, before going out into the world, thereby indicating that he had missed the main thrust of the workers' arguments which centred on the economics of attending high school over university.[12]

After hearing the delegation, the trustees reconsidered the motion to eliminate grade twelve, but they did not rescind it. Further protests were made. A letter from the Jasper Loyal Orange Lodge was received[13] and one of the trustees, Mrs. Bishop, reported that she had had several calls complaining about the board's decision.[14] Nonetheless, the board decided in April to write to the Department of Education to advise it that grade twelve was no longer being offered and to ask that first year university and grade twelve be equated.[15] A prompt reply from the Department of Education informed the board that the granting of such an equivalency was not possible.[16]

Although the board does not appear to have ever formally rescinded the decision to remove grade twelve from the high schools, by June of 1923 other options were being explored. One of these was the possibility of double-shifting in the schools. Trustee Barnes thought this a good idea for it would allow boys the chance to earn money on a half-day basis. The superintendent pointed out that Vancouver had experimented with the double shift and had found several problems with it, specifically a higher rate of examination failures and moral problems with the girls on the second shift who had to walk home after dark. Trustee R. V. Bellamy cited the *Saturday Evening Post's* claim that the system did not work in the United States. Trustee Frank Scott, the labour representative on the board, shared his personal experience with his colleagues for, in his youth, he had gone to school for half-a-day and worked the other half. He said that if he worked in the morning, he was not fit for study in the afternoon and vice-versa. And, perhaps more to the point, he expressed concern that boys would take work way from men.[17]

By the fall of 1923, however, enrolments appeared to level off and the issue temporarily disappeared. By the spring of 1924, though, trustees began to discuss a fee system for high school education as a means to raise revenue[18] and eventually implemented a fee structure of $4.00 per month for out-of-town students only.[19] In

addition, discussions on double shifting recurred with the additional suggestion that schools be opened on Saturday.[20] By this time, the public school system was also exploring the possibility of moving students around from one school to another as a way of coping with overflow enrolments. In April, 1924 it was suggested that the Commercial High School classes which had been housed in McDougall High School be moved to Old Garneau. Representatives from several north side community leagues appeared before the board to oppose the move. They pointed out that most of the 212 students affected lived on the north side and that the Commercial High School had made a name for itself both academically and athletically. One community representative, A. M. Knight, claimed that sport "is one half of the school life" and Dr. Johnston of the Norwood-Patricia Community League made a special appeal to the board asking that the Commercial Grads not be moved for "they have given Edmonton more publicity than anything else."[21] These comments might well be written off to north side chauvinism though it must be remembered that membership on the famous Commercial Grads basketball team would provide opportunities for travel and educational experiences that would otherwise be out of reach for many female students.[22]

J. Percy Page, principal of the Commercial High School and coincidentally coach of the basketball team, argued against the move on academic grounds. He pointed out that in twelve years of existence, the pass rate of the school had been excellent and that plans were afoot to move to a three year course and university entrance so that the school would provide a mix of academic and vocational training. In his view, the move would destroy all that work and "it is the young womanhood that is going to suffer" since 80% of the students were girls. If the Commercial High School were made self-contained, it would be robbed of its academic possibilities. This would detrimentally affect the students, most of whom were from the north side, and thus, by implication the deletrious effects would be

felt most by the daughters (and sons) of the working class.[23]

This last point was emphasized by Mr. S. Heron from the Alberta Avenue and District Community League, a league situated in a solidly working class district. He argued that if the Commercial High School were moved to the south side, workers' families would suffer and might very well have to go without food to pay for the car fares and other expenses necessary to sending their offspring across the city to school.[24]

The movement of students back into their local communities was an administrative strategy to cope with high enrolments that won a considerably warmer reception than the move of the Commercial High School to the south side. This was done by physically removing grade nine classes from the high school buildings and adding them on to the public schools. While the grade nine curriculum continued to be part of the high school program, large numbers of the students remained attached to public schools around the city. Once this system had started it was found difficult to reverse as parents, in particular, liked to have their children going to school close to home. In 1922, for example, S.R. Wallace, a representative of the Highlands and District Community League attended a school board meeting to oppose not only double shifting but the threatened removal of what he called a junior high school from his district. He especially expressed fears for young girls who would be forced to attend Victoria High School if grade nine was transferred there because the girls would have to walk through some of the roughest parts of the city to get to and from classes.[25] Trustee Barnes confirmed that the junior high scheme had been a success and that people did not want to lose the local grade nine classes.[26] As Trustee Bellamy said, though, the junior high school model had been adopted as an administrative expediency because of the lack of rooms in the high school. People would have to realize that once the building program caught up with enrolments all grade nine students would be in the high

schools where they could get a better preparation because teachers could specialize by subject.[27]

By the late 1920s the Edmonton Public School Board was exploring ways to establish an "intermediate" school despite the fact that some trustees argued that the city was not advanced enough for the expense of a real junior high school model.[28] The board was aware of the strong sentiment in the local communities for the retention of grade nine classes in neighbourhood schools and in 1931 formally moved grade nine into the public schools to join grades one to eight.[29]

While a few arguments had been made that such a model would assist the scholastic growth of the young because students entering grade nine were really too immature for high school, the real incentives for the establishment of junior high schools were parental desires to keep the young close to home and administrative needs with respect to space utilization in the schools. As the principal of Oliver Public School, C. G. Elliott, pointed out, the mere grouping of grades seven to nine in a public school did not a "real" junior high make. He argued, and many of his professional colleagues agreed, that the time had come for the establishment of real junior high schools in Edmonton because the 8-4 plan (i.e. eight years of elementary school and four years of high school) was no longer adequate for the needs of all those students who had begun staying on in school until fifteen or even later. Reflecting an acquaintance with the popular adolescent psychology of the day, Elliott claimed that the 8-4 plan could no longer be justified because of what was known about the pyschological development of the young. Elementary methods of teaching were used for too long in the schools and then too suddenly dropped. Furthermore, he suggested, the content of the work covered in the elementary grades neither prepared the students for high school nor for life.

Showing how the psychology and ideology of adolescence was taking root in Edmonton through middle class professionals, Elliott went on to argue for the establishment of junior high schools which would be a transitional form either between elementary and high school work or between school work and the labour market. The junior high school should not only continue teaching subjects of general interest but should cater to each individual student by discovering each pupil's immediate and future needs, by exploring his/her aptitudes and capacities, by revealing to him/her major fields of learning and by starting each teen-ager on the path towards a career said Elliott.[30]

As enrolments in the older age categories increased, a wide range of people including educators at the local and provincial levels, influential citizens, some parents and many trade union leaders began to demand a wider variety of program offerings for students particularly in the area of technical and commercial education. These demands were fuelled not so much by theories of adolescent development, however, as by the perceived and experienced realities of the classroom and the job market. For example, teachers supported the institution of at least two streams in the high schools, one for the true academic students and the other for students seeking vocational training, because they could not cope with the wide range of intellectual capacities and inclinations the new influx of students brought with it. Indeed, by 1931 the high school teachers were recommending the separation of students into academies for scholarship and into high schools for general education for citizenship.[31]

For trade unionists and employers a more pressing need was identified. Because apprenticeship programs in the trades were all but moribund, interest in the academic and vocational preparation possible through the schools increased in the 1920s. In 1919, A. Farmilo, Secretary of the Edmonton Trades and Labor Council, had complained to The Royal Commission on Industrial Relations when it visited

Alberta that "half-educated workmen" were being produced by the city's apprenticeship system.[32] Nearly ten years later, in 1928, T.J. Thornton, the business agent for the Edmonton Local of the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners was voicing a similar complaint about employers and managers who neglected the training of the young and showed more concern for short-term gains than for the development of craftmanship. Thornton did not, however, see the schools as the answer to the training woes of the young and suggested that a well-directed apprenticeship plan modelled on Ontario's Construction Apprenticeship Council be established.[33] He recommended this move as opposed to vocational training in the schools because he recognized some of the dangers of state intervention in the educational process. He specifically criticized technical schools for creating false distinctions between mental and manual workers and argued for programs that would emphasize the continuity of mental and manual craftmanship. He wanted young people to understand the totality of their work and not just one specialized aspect of it.[34] In other words, he argued for the unity of theory and practice.

In fact, the Carpenters and Joiners Local did organize an apprenticeship program for young men between the ages of seventeen and twenty-two, specifying the number of apprentices an employer could hire, the training an apprentice would receive and the wages to be paid over four years of service. Despite elaborate plans, only fourteen apprentices had been indentured between 1927 and 1930 and, of these, four had been suspended and one had withdrawn.[35]

The Brotherhood's failures emphasize the frailty of organized apprenticeship schemes in Edmonton in the 1920s. In most cases, the term "apprentice" became simply a synonym for "learner" and, as some surviving collective agreements show, "learners" were most often people under the age of twenty who were paid lower wages for longer periods of time simply because they were young.[36] Contemporary evidence from other localities shows similar developments. The loss of the old and

meaningful form of apprenticeship was clearly part of the more complex changes in industrial organization that went along with the introduction of new technologies, "scientific" management and the transformation of the labour process.[37] Control over the learning process in the skilled trades passed from workers to a tripartite arrangement that included state regulation and technical school training. This transition marked a significant change in the way in which young men would be prepared for work but only a few trade unionists such as Thornton realized the major implications of this change and were concerned about the "hidden" curriculum that the young would be subjected to throughout their training.

Most trade unionists, as has already been said, uncritically supported the development of technical schools and favoured and encouraged the use of vocational training. They viewed the state as a neutral power operating for the general good and saw the introduction of vocational education as a worth-while reform which would benefit the children of the working class.[38] They limited their demands for change to specific issues such as the abolition of military drill in the schools, the provision of free text-books and the improvement of school health services.[39]

Of course, given the very real difficulties of maintaining meaningful apprenticeship plans, it is no wonder that most unionists opted for what they could get for their children in the schools, particularly as the link between education and employment began to tighten. Furthermore, it was by no means clear that in the initial stages technical education was not going to be a boon to working people. For example, C.L. Gibbs, master printer, teacher in Edmonton's Technical High School and Member of the Legislative Assembly, could argue for technical education on the grounds that it would so imbue workmen's children

> ...with a sense of technical power and a confidence and pride in their own creative skill that they will demand some share in construction and management compatible with their dignity as educated human beings.[40]

On the other hand, W.R. Herbert, a manual training instructor of unknown origins,

could make the conservative case and suggest that technical education would ensure that each man would be

> ...satisfied with his position in life, and liking his work, [would] have few incentives toward revolution, and small patience with revolutionary propaganda.[41]

As is so often the case, the realities of technical education were much more mundane. While some educators made philosophical statements about meeting individual needs and encouraging personal growth, about developing programs designed especially to suit adolescents, others were more pragmatic and straightforward. School work, commented W.G. Carpenter, the provincial supervisor of technical education, was simply designed to duplicate as closely as possible the future work environment and students were *trained* [my emphasis] for real positions.[42] While this approach undoubtedly has conservative implications, there is also little doubt that young people who came to a job with training had some advantage over those without training in an ever-tightening job market.

A report in the *Alberta Labour News*, for example, blamed the unemployment of young office workers on inexperience, immaturity and lack of schooling and urged parents to keep their daughters in school as long as possible.[43] Certainly young people seeking opportunities in the more secure, better paid white-collar jobs required specific skills such as typing, short-hand and accounting and found it to their advantage to acquire these skills in high school commercial classes. Private schools such as the McTavish Business College and Alberta College also taught business education but students would be expected to pay tuition fees, an expense many were unable to afford.[44]

Businessmen, too, were willing to acknowledge the role of vocational education and some spoke glowingly of the advantages. For example, T. Coutts, the owner of an Edmonton machine shop, appeared before the school board to compliment the work of the Technical School and report that the ten to twelve

graduates he had hired were much better trained than he would have thought possible. Indeed, so satisfied was he with the training provided that he sent his own son to the school.[45]

Graduates of the school also expressed satisfaction with the training they received[46] giving credence to the claims made by P.S. Bailey, principal of the Edmonton Technical School, in the "Foreword" to the school's 1922 yearbook, that the school aimed "definitely and unreservedly to prepare young people for the practical affairs of life" and to make each student "more happy and efficient as a worker, citizen and member of society." Because of that, said Bailey, graduating students were protected in hard economic times.[47]

This no-nonsense approach to education supports Troen's view that educators turned their attention to youth in the first few decades of the twentieth century not because of the new ideas of psychology or any stirrings of social conscience but because they recognized their responsibility "to prepare future workers for a technological society."[48] He notes that educators, along with unionists, were concerned with the decline of apprenticeship and responded by proposing vocational education. "Schools became the surrogate for apprenticeship"[49] and a major shift in the role of high schools occurred as they moved from college preparation to vocational training. This is a move which obviously was underway in Edmonton in the 1920s.

Whether or not vocational educators successfully achieved all the goals they set for themselves is questionable, however, since the Edmonton Technical School, at least, suffered from many inadequacies even by its own standards.[50] But regardless of whether students were actually better prepared to face the work world, the real point is that parents and the business community generally believed that vocational education was worth-while and behaved accordingly. In other words, the ideology that held that there was an intimate relationship between schooling and

employment possibilities, because it was believed by the stakeholders, converged with the reality. As Anderson and Bowman have observed

> ...however, tight or tenuous the association between education and economic performance, schooling does tend everywhere to become linked to distinctive contrasts in ways of living...[even though] The correlation between the amount or quality of an individual's education and the kind of work he does is not one- to-one in any society.[51]

Recent studies[52] have demonstrated that much of what goes on in the name of vocational education is not designed to teach specific skills *per se* but is rather to teach work discipline. On the basis of some suggestive evidence similar observations might be made about vocational education in the 1920s. The principal of the Edmonton Technical School explained that boys entered the machine shop "somewhat undisciplined but become steady manly fellows of a splendid type who will be successful mechanics."[53] Or, as the author of an article in *The ATA Magazine* succinctly put it, students should learn "a higher appreciation of the necessity of hard and consistent work, steadiness, exactness, economy in materials, time and effort" in vocational programs.[54]

While vocational or technical and commercial education programs designed to lead clearly to future employment generally had wide support in various constituencies including those of teachers, unionists and businessmen, the supplemental manual arts and household science classes, whether taught in the public school or as an option in the academic high school, did not fare as well. Little opposition was heard when the Edmonton Public School Board temporarily eliminated manual training as a cost saving measure in 1923. In fact, groups such as the Edmonton Trades and Labor Council supported the elimination of both manual training and household science.[55] On the other hand, the Local Council of Women and a delegate from the Ladies Auxiliary to the Brotherhood of Railroad Trainmen argued strongly in favour of the retention of household science in the schools as did Florence Hallock, the supervisor of household science for the school

system.

The debate over manual training and household science is indicative of aspects of the class-based and gendered nature of school experiences for young men and women. The avowed purpose of manual training was to provide boys with some experience and knowledge of hand work or "craftsmanship" in an otherwise traditional academic program.[56] In other words, in theory, at least, the impulse for manual training was a democratic one. But in practice few seem to have been happy with the arrangement. Resources allocated to the program were sparse and throughout the period from 1921 to 1931 criticism focussed on the lack of equipment, facilities and trained teachers and many adults came to conclude that manual training was useless and a waste of time. Manual training became a political foot-ball and its fortunes waxed and waned in accordance with the financial situation of the school board. For example, in 1925, Major A.C. Grant, a representative of the Property Owners' Association (whose watchword was "economy"), was calling for a return to the "3 R's" in public school and he claimed to represent over 700 ratepayers.[57] What was really being objected to was the combination of manual and academic work. Teachers and others resented what they saw as the dilution of academic endeavours and the over-crowding of the curriculum and skilled workers, in particular, disapproved of what they saw as the token and tawdry treatment of their crafts. Thus, the preferred option for many was some clear distinction between vocational training and academic scholarship so both could be done properly, a distinction, however, which divided manual work from mental work, vocational students from academic ones and hence tended to replicate divisions between working class and middle class.[58] That is not to deny that the impulse of progressive education was nonexistent in Edmonton in the 1920s for strands of it can be found everywhere.[59] But the emphasis on individual growth and development only made it easier to argue for the segregation of students in schools

on the basis of their interests and abilities.

The case of household science was a different one, however, for, as Florence Hallock put it, home-making was the ultimate vocation of more than eighty percent of all women. In other words, regardless of their class origins, almost all females would end up doing housework and in Hallock's opinion all young women should thus get some training in the field. She went so far as to argue that education could make home-making a "dignified" occupation for, if it were a recognized part of schooling, it would be made to "seem important."[60]

Support for household science, which by the end of the 1920s was increasingly called home economics, was stronger than it was for manual training because, in fact, most people agreed that it was true that young women would become wives and mothers and some training would be of assistance. Only an occasional voice asked "Shouldn't boys be taught 'fatherhood'?"[61]

As adults attempted to cope with the increasing numbers and changing nature of students in the high schools, the teen-agers themselves had to deal with the concrete results of decisions taken by their elders. In general, they found themselves in classes with large numbers of other students. In 1924 the average class size was 32.04 in the senior high schools and 34.69 in the "junior high" schools.[62] By 1929 class size had increased dramatically so that in January the superintendent of schools reported that there were over 110 high school classes, all of which had over forty pupils in attendance and fifty-eight of which had enrolments of from forty-five to sixty-eight.[63] As a result of rapidly increasing enrolments, the physical facilities were stretched to the limit and all available space was being utilized. Students were shifted from one school to another, sometimes, it appears, part-way through the school year and many others found their classrooms in basements. In 1928, for example, fifty grade nine students were housed in a basement room in Strathcona High School.[64] Consistent complaints about the

sanitary conditions of the schools were also lodged with the Edmonton Public School Board throughout the period and, at one point, a doctor observed that there was more illness and disease among high school students than among others.[65]

Since age-segregation is one of the tests historians use to determine the existence of a concept of childhood and adolescence[66], it is instructive to note the broad range of ages which could be found within any given classroom in Edmonton in the 1920s. Although classroom registers have not been kept in any consistent and methodical way, a partial collection from the Oliver Public School reveals that teen-agers could be found in grades as low as the third one. Grade five classes had students who ranged in age from 9 to 14, grade six had a range from 10 to 14, grade seven had students from 11 to 17 and grade eight from 12 to 17. While the majority of students in each grade were most often within the two year range that would be normal for children beginning school at age six and progressing at the rate of one year per grade, a substantial number of students were outside this normal pattern and were either very retarded in their progress or very accelerated.[67] The lack of a tight age-grading system can also be seen in the ages of students who entered Normal School to take teacher-training. The 1923 Annual Report of the Department of Education observed

> ...our adolescents are rushing through high school at a furious rate, and the number seems to be increasing of those who find themselves with a diploma for Grade XI or Grade XII at such a tender age that they hardly know what to do with themselves. ...the spectacle of these children of fifteen years trying to master the principles and practice of teaching approaches the ridiculous.[68]

By 1931 the Normal Schools had taken this matter in hand by establishing both quotas and an age of entry of eighteen which meant that the number of students staying on to complete grade twelve increased.[69] It also meant, according to Trustee Crang, hardships for many families which had struggled to keep children in school through grade eleven in order that they might enter Normal School, get a teaching

certificate and be able to go out to work.[70] The implication here is that working class families, in particular, used teacher training at Normal Schools as a way for their children to move into the middle class.[71]

Beyond allowing students to complete school as quickly as they could, there is no evidence that any steps were taken to enrich the academic experiences of bright students. And, by 1929, the High School Teachers' Alliance was complaining about the problem of a great diversity of age in students since twelve year-olds were entering high school but were considered too immature for the work. The teachers suggested that "skipping" be disallowed. They did not suggest any alternative for bright youngsters.[72] Slower students, however, did become a focus of concern in the public school system and in 1928 a full-time school psychologist was appointed[73] to test students and select candidates for special classes for those with low intelligence quotients.[74]

By the end of the 1920s, then, the testing, classification and age-sorting associated with more "modern" ideas about child and adolescent psychology were gaining a foot-hold in the Edmonton schools. Professors at the University of Alberta, instructors in Normal Schools and teachers within the school system were learning about and implementing new trends in education. Many took graduate training at places like Stanford and Chicago[75] and were familiar with the work of Dewey and others and those who were unable or unwilling to attend big American universities found that they were reading works by Terman, King, Dewey, Briggs and Hall as part of their in-service or summer school training.[76] Discussions about progressive education, mental hygiene and vocational guidance were increasingly common-place[77] as educators began to respond to what they perceived to be the changing nature of the high school student population.

While the academic program and methods of teaching in the high schools remained fairly traditional throughout the 1920s with the growth of vocational education being the only really measurable indicator of changing circumstances, more subtle trends reflecting changes in the experiences of teen-agers were occasionally remarked upon by observers, often in a critical way. Specifically, the development of a particular form of teen-aged youth culture, which Kett and others have linked to the growth of high schools,[78] can be found in Edmonton in the 1920s. As early as 1920, the Senior Inspector of the High Schools noted that schools were taking more interest in the social development of the child and principals were accepting that

> ...the administration of the social activities among students [was] a legitimate and regular function of the office, and one full of possibilities for education and character making.[79]

In other words, the social and recreational life of teen-agers came to interest and involve educators in ways it had never done before once large numbers began to linger in the schools. The casual, self-organized activities of the street or of the dance hall common to many employed or out-of-work youths was deemed inappropriate for teen-agers in schools yet their sheer numbers forced the schools to devise "suitable" recreational pursuits which would enhance the goals of the curriculum through safe and supervised means.

Throughout the 1920s high schools students were increasingly able to participate in organized school sports, literary clubs, debating societies and the like. School yearbooks reveal the kind of adult-supervised youth culture that is more closely identified with students of the 1950s.[80] The flavour is one of the care-free days of youth, practical jokes, gentle boy-girl teasing and school spirit especially as reflected in the participation in school sports. There are a few hints of boredom and tedium but none of sexual harassment, physical abuse, poverty or malnutrition though suggestive evidence of all these realities can be found elsewhere.[81]

The school's involvement with the social life of the young was not, however, without its critics. An article in *The ATA Magazine* commented on the complaints from employers about students who, on leaving school, were unable to spell, read, write or do mathematics , a failing which the businessmen ascribed to too many frills in the schools.[82] The author, however, was quick to deny the culpability of the schools and turned the blame on homes and families who were, in his view, abrogating their responsibilities for the young. Furthermore, he said, teachers cannot be expected to teach English to "Vladimirs, Ivans, Sonieas, Pierres and Oles" when they get incorrect or broken English at home.[83] Other educators were also concerned that academic performance in the schools might be suffering although, in general, their inclination was to blame the students for a failure to apply themselves to their studies. The Superintendent of Schools, for example, felt high school students gave in too easily to distractions and went in for too much sports.[84] The Inspector of High Schools expressed concerns that the extra-curricular work of the schools made too great a demand on student time and felt that "numerous distractions of various types place a great strain upon the moral stamina of the students."[85] Teachers, themselves expressed certain ambivalences about the role of the school. On the one hand, teachers argued that planning and organizing social activities was part of the education students should receive in the schools. On the other hand, teachers felt considerable sympathy for the view that the school was being asked to do too much and that students simply did not take their work seriously enough.[86]

While it is, of course, difficult to entirely gauge the scholastic performance of teen-aged students in the 1920s, the traditional method of evaluation, passing final examinations, revealed that Edmonton's youth were relatively successful scholars, at least by that criterion. For example, in 1924, in the public schools, 80% of the grade ten students passed, as did 62% of the grade eleven and 77% of the grade

twelve students.[87] In the separate schools, 90% of the grade eight students passed their high school entrance examinations and 64% of the high school students were promoted, a figure 10% above the provincial average.[88]

Nonetheless, extra-curricular activities were an area where considerable friction occurred between adults and teen-agers. While some evidence of the occasional discipline problem in the schools can be found,[89] there is more substantial evidence to show that students who stayed in school asserted their independence and struggled for control far more regularly over their social lives than over anything else. An instructive case in-point is the continuing dispute over dancing in schools.

In the fall of 1920, the Edmonton Public School Board decided that dancing would not be allowed in schools and in that decision they were supported by the Women's Christian Temperance Union and by the representative of the Alberta Teachers' Alliance, Mr. Sheppard, who said dancing by pupils was simply "not the proper thing".[90] In 1921, however, in at least one high school, students reportedly "got out of hand ... on account of the fact that it was known that there would be no dancing"[91] and refused to organize or participate in any social activities unless dancing were allowed. The teachers decided to "reason" with the students and a compromise was achieved. Consequently, Miss Teskey, one of the teachers, speaking on behalf of the teaching staff, Literary Society and grade twelve class asked the school board to allow dancing at the annual "At Home", a parent-student affair. She also indicated that students had wanted dancing at two or three other parties to be held for the grade twelve students only during the school year. Teskey explained that she had reasoned with the students and suggested that one other party with dancing would be sufficient but that they could invite guests from the previous year's grade twelve class. Teskey also informed the trustees that the issue had been taken up with the other members of staff and , while they refused to approve of

dancing in grades ten and eleven, they felt it might be acceptable in grade twelve. Teskey concluded her presentation to the board by pointing out that teachers were called upon to organize the social life in schools and that if students were not allowed to dance in schools, they would do so in private homes where they would be unsupervised.[92]

The board unanimously agreed that dancing could be allowed at the "At Home" since parents and their young would all be in attendance. The reaction to the request for dancing at the grade twelve parties was more ambivalent. Some trustees expressed concern about private house parties among "a certain set" and acknowledged that dancing at schools would have a distinct educational purpose. But how could it be kept from the other grades? What effect would dancing have on the over-all level of discipline? The superintendent indicated that his peers in Calgary, Regina and Brandon had decided that "this type of amusement" had come to a crisis and that in Regina, in particular, "terrible" charges were being made about the moral condition of high school boys and girls. Trustee Frank Scott declared that he was "not opposed to them having a good time, but he hates the contemptible thing that they call dancing around here."[93] The school board refused to change their policy and students were unable to dance at school parties.

In 1924 the Strathcona Students' Union attempted to circumvent the opposition of their teachers to school dancing by going directly to the board to seek permission to hold a dance at King Edward School. Not surprisingly, the board yet again refused to allow dancing.[94] By 1925, however, the community leagues were organizing dances in the schools. The Ministerial Association expressed their unanimous opposition to such a move but as one community league representative put it, "if the Ministerial Association studied dance in the city, it would find more people dancing than going to church."[95] W.C. Deane, speaking for the Edmonton Federation of Community Leagues, was less inflammatory. He indicated that he was

personally opposed to dancing but as the father of seven children ranging in age from sixteen to twenty-three, he had a problem in his own family. He felt that teen-agers were going to dance whether adults liked it or not and thus it was better that they be allowed to dance in their own communities where they could be supervised in social situations with family and friends rather than in downtown cabarets and dance halls. If public schools were closed to dancing, he argued, young people would drift downtown and conditions would get much worse among the young.[96] No record was kept of the final decision on community dancing in the schools but it appears that the attitude of the school board softened and the argument about controlled and supervised dancing being preferable to the alternatives won the day. Thus teen-agers still in school won a partial battle. They were allowed to dance but only under adult supervision, a condition which for many could only change when they became school leavers and assumed more independence as wage earners.

School leaving is an issue which has already been touched on in relation to participation in the work force. We have seen that many young people came from families which could not afford to keep them out of the labour market to attend school. The best these early school leavers could hope for was work in low-skill, dead-end jobs which offered low pay and no job security.[97] Economically determined early school leaving could sometimes even affect children from wealthier families struck by sudden tragedy or change in circumstances. Fifteen year-old Jean C., the son of a prominent member of the Franco-Albertan elite who had been an M.L.A., provincial cabinet minister and Canadian Senator, was forced to leave school when his father suddenly died in 1924. The young man, who had been attending Francis Xavier College, a private Jesuit college, enrolled in a stenography course at Alberta College to get some quick training for employment. On the advice of family friends, he and his mother visited the offices of Canadian

National Railways where he immediately found work as an apprentice stenographer at a wage rate of $60.00 per month for a five and a half day work week at eight hours per day. It seems clear that his class connections helped him secure relatively well-paying work quickly and this fact separated him from teen-agers who came from less privileged family circumstances. Nonetheless, the money he and his younger brother earned was essential to the maintenance of the family and his education was cut short as part of a family strategy.[98]

While many teen-agers were forced to leave school for economic reasons, others dropped out under somewhat different conditions. A number of parents continued to believe that the basic skills of reading, writing and arithmetic were all young people needed and still others claimed, "I only had grade six and that's good enough for you,too." Girls were often told that education was not important because they were just going to get married anyway and might as well earn some money for a few years.[99] Of course, many teen-agers, especially boys, also left school because they were bored or unhappy or because they were unable to cope with the work. For other teen-agers, however, the decision to leave school was a more subtle and complex one based on ideas about family loyalty and obligation and invisible ties to parents and siblings became a significant factor in the decision-making process around school leaving. In the working class, said one observer, the young felt a duty to their parents to begin contributing to the family income since their parents were aging, had worked hard all their lives and had scrimped and saved to support their children. At fifteen, many teen-agers felt they owed something to their parents and it was time to pay off the debt.[100]

For young Roman Catholics with a commitment to their faith, other factors came into play. While these teen-agers might feel the need or the desire to leave school, their Church encouraged young men, in particular, to stay on as long as they could either in preparation for the priesthood or to ensure that through education the

number of Roman Catholics in senior positions, management and business would increase.[101] Roman Catholic boys and girls were exhorted to stay in school not just for themselves but for the good of the faith.[102]

During the 1920s, there was considerable recognition on the part of the school system that a need for continuing education existed especially for people who had had to drop out of school at an early age. Part-time evening classes were provided in various technical subjects and were well-subscribed although whether the students in these classes were older teens or men over twenty cannot be determined. The popularity of evening classes in the early 1920s suggests that returning soldiers may well have taken advantage of the opportunities for further learning in large numbers.[103]

One of the hallmarks of the 1920s, then, was the growing number of teen-agers who attended school past the age when they could have legally dropped out. Thus, an increasingly larger portion of the youthful population was withdrawn from the labour market and experienced a longer period of delayed responsibility and increased dependence on and supervision by adults, the very characteristics which suggest that for those students, at least, a "modern" adolescence was arriving.

FOOTNOTES

[1]Patricia T. Rooke and R. L. Schnell, "Childhood Rescued and Restrained in English Canada," in *Studies in Childhood History: A Canadian Perspective*, ed. Patricia T. Rooke and R. L. Schnell (Calgary: Detselig Enterprises Limited, 1982), p. 207. See also R. L. Schnell, "Childhood as Ideology," *British Journal of Educational Studies* 27 (February 1979), pp. 7-28.

[2]Kett, *Rites of Passage*, p.254.

[3]Minutes of the EPSB, 4 January 1923, p. 4036. See also Chapter Two of this thesis.

[4]Minutes of the EPSB, 20 October 1921, p. 3220.

[5]Ibid., 23 March 1922, p. 3490.

[6]Ibid., 1 March 1923, pp. 4160-63.

[7]Ibid., 6 March 1923, p. 4165.

[8]Ibid., pp.4169-71.

[9]Ibid.

[10]Ibid.

[11]Ibid.

[12]Ibid.

[13]Ibid., 5 April 1923, p. 4222.

[14]Ibid., 11 April 1923, p. 4250.

[15]Ibid.

[16]Ibid., 19 April 1923, p. 4252.

[17]Ibid., 21 June 1923, pp.4368-71.

[18]Ibid., 20 March 1924, pp. 4850-53.

[19]Ibid., 17 April 1924, p.4903.

[20]Ibid., 6 June 1924, p. 4953.

[21]Ibid., 17 April 1924, p.4884.

[22]MacGregor, *Edmonton*, pp. 234-235.

[23]Minutes of the EPSB, 17 April 1924, p.4884.

[24]Ibid.

[25]Ibid., 16 March 1922, p. 3473.

[26]Ibid., 23 March 1922, p. 3492.

[27]Ibid., 6 June 1924, p.4954.

[28]Ibid., 12 March 1928, p. 6848 and 27 August 1929, pp.7407- 7410.

[29]Ibid., 21 July 1931, p. 8506.

[30]E.G. Elliott, "The Junior High School," *The ATA Magazine and the ASTA Magazine* XI (July 1931): 26-27.

[31]Minutes of the EPSB, 20 January 1931, p. 8211.

[32]Reported in *Edmonton Free Press*, 10 May 1919.

[33]From a letter by Thornton in *Alberta Labor News*, 3 November 1928.

[34]Ibid. Thornton's argument foreshadows much of what Braverman, *Labor and Monopoly Capital* has to say about the degradation of work.

[35]PAA, Papers of the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners, Local 1325 (Edmonton), Acc. No. 67.88, File 142, "Report on Apprentices", 28 Novemebr 1930.

[36]For lower wages by virtue of age, see, for example, details of the collective agreement between the City of Edmonton and the Canadian Electrical Trade Union in *The Labour Gazette* (September 1925), pp. 928-929.

[37]See Jamieson, *Times of Trouble*, p.196; Braverman, *Labor and Monopoly Capital*; "The Decline of Apprenticeship," *The Labour Gazette* (May 1927), 532-533; "Apprenticeship in Canada," *The Labour Gazette* (July 1921), pp.892-899; Marsh, *Employment Research*, p.103; H.A. Weir, "Unemployed Youth," *Canada's Unemployment Problem*, ed. L. Richter (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1939), p. 129.

[38]See Timothy A. Dunn, "Teaching the Meaning of Work" for a discussion of the various ways in which vocational education was understood.

[39]These are recurring themes in *Alberta Labour News* over the period from 1921-1931, in the platforms of labour candidates running for office and in representations made to the Edmonton Public School Board over the years.

[40]C.L. Gibbs, "The Possibilities and Limitations of Technical Education," *The ATA Magazine* XI (December 1930), p. 5.

[41]W. R. Herbert, "Practical Education," *The ATA Magazine* I (December 1920), p. 27.

[42]W.G. Carpenter, "An Address on 'Technical Education in Alberta'," *The ATA Magazine* XI (June 1931), pp. 4-5.

[43]"Enquiry Made Into Unemployment Among Local Business Girls," *Alberta Labor News*, 18 October 1930.

[44]For example, see, PAA, United Church Records, Acc. No. 75.387, Box UC8, File 160/2, Alberta College South Accounts Ledger, 1 July 1921-30 June 1922. Students living out paid $84.00 for the September to April term. Those requiring room and board paid $38-40 per month. Several notations indicate students in arrears. See, also, PAA, Private Schools, Acc. No. 77.170, Box 3/16, File 19 which lists all the private schools in Edmonton in 1927-28. There were three business colleges, Elston, McTavish and Alberta College and seven other private schools—Jesuit College, Ruthenian School, Llanarthnay School for Girls, Westward Ho! School for Boys, Concordia College, St. John's College and St. Joseph's College.

[45]Minutes of the EPSB, 27 July 1931, p.8524.

[46]Ibid., pp. 8524-8535.

[47]PAA, McKitrick Papers, Acc. No. 72.256, Box 7, "The Tech: Annual Number, 1922."

[48]Selwyn K. Troen, "The Discovery of the Adolescent by American Educational Reformers, 1900-1920: An Economic Perspective," in *Schooling and Society: Studies in the History of Education*, ed. Lawrence Stone (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976): 239-251.

[49]Ibid., p. 248.

[50]See, for example, Minutes of the EPSB, 5 May 1931, pp. 8382-8383.

[51]C. Arnold Anderson and Mary Jean Bowman, "Education and Economic Modernization in Historical Perspective," in *Schooling and Society: Studies in the History of Education*, ed. Lawrence Stone (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976):7.

[52]On the "hidden" curriculum, see, for example, articles in Michael W. Apple, ed., *Cultural and Economic Reproduction in Education: Essays on Class, Ideology and the State*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1982; Stephen Walker and Len Barton, eds., *Gender, Class and Education* (Lewes, Sussex: The Falmer Press, 1983).

[53]Minutes of the EPSB, 27 July 1931, p. 8535.

[54]Frank Speakman, "The Meaning and Practice of Prevocational Education," *The ATA Magazine*, I (December 1920): 28-32.

[55]Minutes of the EPSB, 6 March 1923. p. 4165.

[56]Ibid., 5 May 1931, pp. 8382-8385.

[57]Ibid., 19 February 1925, p. 5267.

[58]A classic analysis of this is found in Samuel Bowles and Herbert Gintis, *Schooling in Capitalist America: Educational Reform and the Contradictions of Economic Life* (New York: Basic Books, Inc., Publishers, 1976).

[59]See, Patterson, "The Establishment of Progressive Education"; Alberta, Department of Education *Annual Reports*, 1920-1931; University of Alberta Archives (hereafter UAA), Papers of the Education Society of Edmonton, 73-185 M.G., Box I, Items 1-26; PAA, Premiers' Papers, 69.289, File 137B, C.O. Hicks, Principal, Victoria High School to J.E. Brownlee, Premier, 22 July 1929.

[60]Florence Hallock, "The Vocational Problem of the Girl," *The ATA Magazine*, XI (April 1931): 38-39.

[61]UAA, Papers of the Education Society of Edmonton, 73-185 M.G., Box I, Minutes of the Regular Meeting, 28 February 1931.

[62]Minutes of the EPSB, 10 October 1924, p.5082.

[63]Ibid., 15 January 1929, pp. 7178-7179.

[64]Ibid., 18 September 1928, p. 7043.

[65]Complaints about the poor sanitary conditions and the overcrowding in the schools can be found throughout the minutes of the EPSB. See, especially, Minutes of the EPSB, 8 September 1927, p. 6602 on health of high school students.

[66]Ariès, *Centuries of Childhood*; Rooke and Schnell, *Discarding the Asylum*; Kett, *Rites of Passage*; Gillis, *Youth and History*.

[67]CEA, Oliver Public School Records, MS 5, Boxes 2 and 3, School Registers.

[68]Alberta, Department of Education, *Annual Report, 1923*, p. 30.

[69]Minutes of the EPSB, 7 May 1931, p. 8397.

[70]Ibid., 26 May 1931, p. 8442.

[71]For a discussion of teacher training as a means to membership in the middle class see Frances Widdowson, *Going Up Into the Next Class: Women and Elementary Teacher Training, 1840-1914* (London: Women's Research and Resources Centre Publications, 1980). For an innovative and enlightening view of the proletarianization of teaching and its link to the sexual division of labour, see Marta Danylewycz and Alison Prentice, "Teachers' Work: Changing Patterns and Perceptions in the Emerging School Systems of Nineteenth- and Early Twentieth-Century Central Canada," *Labour/Le Travail* 17 (Spring 1986): 59-80.

[72]Minutes of the EPSB, 27 August 1929, pp. 7407-7410.

[73]Ibid., 24 July 1928, pp. 6990-6991.

[74]Ibid., 20 November 1928, p. 7118.

[75]Ibid., 9 June 1931, pp. 8449-8450; Patterson, "The Establishment of Progressive Education".

[76]UAA, Accession Files, Extension Library, 76-2-1, RG 16, Items 1-7; UAA, Calendars, Acc. No. 70-152-5, Summer School for Teachers; Alberta, Department of Education, *Annual Report 1924* reports 16 students took course called

"Psychology of Adolescence" at summer school; Alberta, Department of Education, *Annual Report*, 1923, p. 27.

[77]See, for example, discussions in EPSB minutees of mass I.Q. testing for the purposes of classifying students, 27 August 1929, pp.7412-7413; of sterilization for the mentally defective, 27 January 1927, p. 6345; of co-operation with MacEachern's Mental Hygiene Clinic at the University of Alberta, 9 November 1929; of mental survey conducted by Hincks and the Canadian Association of Mental Hygiene, 19 January 1922, p. 3383; of free use of schools by Edmonton Committee on Mental Hygiene. 7 February 1924. Evidence of the interest in vocational education and "progressive education" has already been cited above.

[78]Kett, *Rites of Passage*, chapters 8 and 9.

[79]Alberta, Department of Education, *Annual Report*, 1920, p. 21.

[80]Both the *Edmonton Journal* and the *Edmonton Bulletin* consistently carried stories about the social and athletic events in the high schools.

[81]On malnutrition see Minutes of the EPSB, 6 April 1922, p. 3506; 17 December 1929, p. 7565; 20 April 1922, p. 3541. On sexual harassment, see 11 September 1930, pp. 7882-7883. On abuse see 13 August 1929, pp.7364-7367; 13 January 1921, p. 2593. On poverty and its effects on students see 20 July 1922, p. 3754; 18 September 1924, p. 5042; 12 February 1925, pp. 5255-5256; 18 September 1929, p. 7025; 5 March 1929, pp. 7224- 7225; 11 March 1930, p. 7681; 12 January 1932, pp. 8865-8870. On abuse of students by teachers see, also, *Edmonton Bulletin*, 7 January 1921, p. 13.

[82]Elmer E. Luck, "The High School Today—What We Expect of It and What We Get," *The ATA Magazine* IX (December 1928): 5-7.

[83]Ibid.

[84]Minutes of the EPSB, 18 September 1924, pp. 5050-5051.

[85]Alberta, Department of Education, *Annual Report*, 1922, p. 18.

[86]Minutes of the EPSB, 9 February 1922, pp. 3401-3402; 18 September 1928, p. 7029.

[87]Ibid., 10 October 1924, pp. 5082-5083.

[88]CEA, Edmonton Separate School Board, MS 173, A69-113, Annual Report, 1924.

[89]See, for example, Minutes of the EPSB, 4 November 1920, p. 2452 on vandalism; 9 June 1931, p. 8448 on suspensions for disobeying principal and truancy.

[90]Minutes of the EPSB, 18 November 1920, pp. 2475-2477.

[91]Ibid., 9 February 1922, p. 3401.

[92]Ibid., pp. 3401-3402.

[93]Ibid., pp. 3407-3409.

[94]Ibid., 31 January 1924, pp. 4768-4769.

[95]Ibid., 19 February 1925, p. 5265.

[96]Ibid.

[97]E.A. Bott, "Juvenile Employment in Relation to Public Schools and Industries in Toronto" in *Studies in Industrial Psychology*, Vol IV (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1920), pp.7-125.

[98]Interview with Jean C., 2 November 1981.

[99]Interview with Edith S., 12 November 1981.

[100]Ibid.

[101]"Our Catholic Boys", *Western Catholic*, 23 September 1926; on entering the priesthood, see, for example, *Western Catholic*, 30 July 1930, p.7.

[102]*Western Catholic*, 23 June 1921, p.4; 31 August 1922, p.2; 22 May 1924, p. 6; 5 September 1929, p. 4.

[103]Minutes of the EPSB, 4 November 1920, p. 2450; 3 April 1924, pp. 4872-4874.

CHAPTER FIVE

TEEN-AGERS AND THEIR LEISURE TIME

If a concept of modern adolescence was absent in the labour market and just arriving in the school system, the same cannot be said of youth groups and agencies designed to control the leisure time of teen-agers and prevent delinquency for it was there that the influence of G. Stanley Hall and other early twentieth-century theorists of adolescence was most marked in Edmonton in the 1920s and it was there that the most self-conscious attempts were made to translate theory into practice. It cannot be said, however, that any evidence exists to demonstrate that Edmontonians thought or acted in innovative ways or developed radical departures from the trans-Atlantic consensus identified by Sutherland, Hareven and Rooke.[1] Youth work activities in Alberta's capital were wholly derivative though Albertans often prided themselves on fine-tuning ideas and approaches adopted from elsewhere.[2] The derivative nature of youth work in Alberta should not be surprising since many of the people engaged in helping and supervising teen-agers had migrated to Edmonton from central Canada or the United States bringing with them the ideological baggage of the middle class social reformers and child savers located in those two areas.[3] Without exception, the institutions and organizations of older cities in Canada, the United States and Great Britain were re-created, essentially unchanged, in Edmonton.

The best exponent of the way in which the theoretical underpinnings of youth work were understood in Edmonton was R.B. Chadwick, Alberta's first superintendent of neglected children. Chadwick, originally from Ontario, had worked with the Boys' Club in New York and the Boys' Department of the Young Men's Christian Association in Toronto and Edmonton before assuming the

provincial post in 1909.[4] While his reports, which included his explanations of the theory of adolescence, were produced in the decade prior to 1921, they serve to illustrate the way in which many adults in Edmonton would continue to think about teen-agers in the context of youth work well into the 1930s.[5]

While Chadwick and his colleagues used both the terms "adolescent" and "teen-ager" sparingly and were more inclined to speak of the "third age of childhood" or "the boy and girl problem", it is clear that they were popularizing and disseminating Hall's ideas about adolescence.[6] In 1911, for example, Chadwick singled out that stage of life from the ages of thirteen to seventeen as one fraught with danger. Echoing Hall he said

> During this period the child is up against the most serious time of its life. Rapid physical and mental growth, lack of knowledge of how to conduct itself under new conditions and circumstances, the ambitions and desires of men and women with the experience of children to carry them [*sic*] through this trying time, are a few of the many trials to which the child is subjected.[7]

By 1912 Chadwick had extended the age range of this "dangerous" period for boys to the ages of ten to eighteen and tied it to sexual awakening and the need to assert independence. Adolescence, said Chadwick, was marked by physical and mental restlessness and impulsive behaviour. The adolescent boy finds

> No emotion is too deep, no song too gay for him to participate in. He is explosive and submissive, varying in turn with a speed that is most ominous to those who are not familiar with boy life....[8]

Because teen-aged boys were seen as given to acting on impulse and desirous of excitement and immediate gratification, often within the context of "gang" activity, their lives were considered to be in need of constant supervision by responsible adults.

then the husband-and the desirability of pre-marital chastity.[11] While Chadwick had some idea of a developmental psychology of male adolescence which he saw as having a base in science, no counter-part was offered for females and, as has been indicated, the "problem of the girl" was seen only in terms of morality. This bifurcation between what was understood as a normal adolescence for boys as opposed to girls had significant ramifications for the ways in which young males and females were treated.

If Chadwick's ideas about adolescence seem simplistic, it must be remembered that the social sciences, from which most of our current theory is drawn, were still in their infancy. Furthermore, in a city which was, in important senses, still a frontier community composed of people from elsewhere, citizens eschewed theory for the more practical approach of "getting things done".[12] This was evidenced in a concern for the more pragmatic aspects of what they termed "the boy and girl problem" and practical work in areas such as youth groups and the juvenile court system. A closer examination of some of these activities and the ways in which they were rationalized and justified will provide a more complete picture of what adults thought youth was all about.

Edmonton in the 1920s had a full complement of youth groups, especially church-sponsored ones. Boy Scout and Girl Guide troops were found throughout the city, the Canadian Girls in Training were active, the Y.M.C.A. and the Y.W.C.A. sponsored boys' and girls' clubs respectively, young peoples' groups were active in many churches and community leagues and other organizations established various sports teams or groups.[13] In most cases these youth groups were part of a national or international organization and followed the same programs and had the same goals as youth groups throughout Canada, the United States and Britain.[14]

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While the records of youth groups in Edmonton are at best spotty, a fairly good indication of how boys' work, and to a lesser extent, girls' work, was understood and implemented in Edmonton can be gleaned from the sources. The most complete outline of the purpose and practice of boys' work, as it was explained to adults, is found in the pages of the *Western Catholic* where the role of Edmonton's Knights of Columbus is well-described as part of the broader coverage given the boys' work of the Roman Catholic Church in North America. The involvement of this church in the work of youth groups like Boy Scouts is particularly significant since it, of all the mainstream Christian churches, most constantly emphasized the key role and responsibility of parents in the education and preparation of youths for life. By the 1920s, however, Roman Catholic leaders were agreeing that the conditions of an urbanized and industrialized modern society made parental supervision, especially *paternal* supervision, an increasingly rare event and they were whole-heartedly recommending boys' group as a method to fill the gap left by the inability or unwillingness of parents to supervise teen-agers.[15]

The main Canadian spokesperson for this work was Brother Barnabas who, at various times, was vice-president of the Canadian Council on Child Welfare, an international Boy Scout leader and secretary of the Knights of Columbus Boy Life Bureau.[16] He visited Edmonton on several occasions and spoke to many groups about the ways in which youth work should be handled. In particular, he spent time talking to the Knights of Columbus both from an educational and motivational perspective.

He, like many of his social reform oriented colleagues, adapted and popularized G. Stanley Hall's ideas about adolescence by presenting them in a way which was useful in justifying involvement in boys' work. Like Chadwick, Brother Barnabas emphasized the importance of the ages twelve to eighteen in an emerging developmental model which isolated this period of life as the key one in character

formation. In a particularly Canadian analogy, he likened the boy to Niagara Falls and noted

> The wind will blow and the water will dash along, do what we will. But the wind which plays havoc in the garden turns the windmill industriously, and the power of the water which upsets the boat may be harnessed to run an engine. The boy's restless energy, if directed, may be guided to useful pursuit and wholesome ideals.[17]

He went on to argue that where once the boys had received the necessary guidance at home, modern conditions of urbanization and industrialization and the resultant complexity of life militated against parents being able to provide full-time supervision of their offspring. Furthermore, since low wages had driven men out of the teaching profession, leaving only women in the classroom, boys were denied strong male models in school, too. The time had come, Brother Barnabas suggested, for the development of a program of directed activity for all boys during their leisure time and for the professional training of men who would take on the establishment and running of such programs.

The case for this method of attack was made on the grounds that boys, even those attending school, had eight hours of leisure time each day during which their future lives would be made or broken. Given the view that teen-aged males had natural needs for the companionship of their own kind and for heroes to worship, it seemed appropriate to suggest the establishment of a cadre of young, educated adult males with high moral standards to provide role models and leadership for younger males and to organize and manage the volunteers engaged in boys' work programs. The goal of all this was, of course, to prevent delinquent behaviour and to build not only the character of the boys but through them "the character of the world tomorrow."[18]

So seriously did the Knights of Columbus in North America take the task of "boyology", the study and guidance of boy life, that a two-year M.A. program in Boy Guidance was established at Notre Dame University with the first class graduating in 1926. One of the members of that class was Cyril Burchell of Edmonton who had been sponsored by the local Knights of Columbus and who was expected to return to Alberta to practise his new "profession" as a boy worker.[19] His training had included a year devoted to foundational work in the liberal arts with a special emphasis on the psychology of adolescence and a course entitled "The Principles and Theory of Boy Work". In this course

> ...every phase of boy activity is studied, in its history, in its development and in its everyday practice, in order that the students when placed in the actual working field may evolve the best procedures depending on the circumstances in which they find themselves.[20]

During the summer semester, students spent two weeks studying the Boy Scout program and woodcraft and six weeks working in boys' camps.

The second year of the graduate program stressed the administration of boys' work and included a compulsory practicum and the preparation of a thesis on some practical aspect of boys' work. At the end of this period of professional preparation, it was expected that graduates would be ready to work not only in boys' clubs, community centres and the Boy Scout movement but as juvenile court probation officers, camp directors and counsellors, directors of municipal recreation departments, playground supervisors and recreational officers for large industrial concerns.

Unfortunately the sources are silent on the nature of the tasks taken up by Cyril Burchell on his return to Edmonton though it is clear that the Knights of Columbus, who had sponsored Burchell, continually put most of their efforts into organizing and maintaining Boy Scout troops and that Burchell assisted with this work during his summer practicum between the first and second year of his

training.[21] There is no written evidence to suggest that Edmonton's Roman Catholic community was uncomfortable with its involvement with a youth group that originated in the imperial sentiments of Lord Baden-Powell though the implicit militarism and the English tone of the Boy Scout movement must have troubled at least some Franco-Albertans. The attempts to establish the Columbian Squires, the youth wing of the Knights of Columbus, in Edmonton might, however, be seen as evidence that the Boy Scout alternative was not favoured by all Roman Catholic men.[22]

Roman Catholic Boy Scout troops, like all others, engaged in those activities now closely identified with scouting, activities which emphasized the outdoor life, games playing, woodsmanship and other areas designed to utilize what was seen as the primitive urges of boys for action and excitement. From the lofty heights of Brother Barnabas' conviction that the very survival of a civilized world depended on the proper supervision and guidance of adolescent males by university-educated professionals to the trifling mundanity of knot-tying and occasional camp-outs is a distance that illustrates only too well the gap between the ideology and the practice of boys' work.

That this gap was not as wide in girls' work is a reflection of the more limited role assigned to women in Canadian society in the 1920s. The comparatively under-developed and certainly most often unstated psychology of female adolescence, the emphasis on keeping young women chaste and the view that all girls were destined to be wives and mothers meant that groups for young females tended to focus on keeping their members occupied with tasks suited to training the next generation of housewives, mothers and church and social service volunteers. For example, while the aim of the Girl Guides was the development of good citizenship, it was citizenship defined as teaching girls "services useful to the public and handicrafts useful to themselves; promoting their physical development; making

them capable of keeping good homes and of bringing up good children."[23]

This made the Girl Guides a suitable female counter-part to the Boy Scouts for the Roman Catholic Church since the stated goals of that organization appropriately matched the vision of women's existence which Edmonton's Archbishop outlined in 1923.

> A woman should be like the sun, shedding warmth and brightness everywhere. The sun beautifies the earth, gives to the fruits their varied hues, and causes the little birds to sing. So should a woman fill her home with joy and happiness and make her influence felt by all with whom she comes in contact. All this she can prepare to do by cultivating her mind, acquiring habits of thrift, developing her talents and thus produce the flowers and fruits of kind words and good actions.[24]

While the Knights of Columbus were busily engaged in boys' work through the Boy Scouts, the Catholic Women's League was being urged to establish Girl Guide companies "for the general welfare of the Catholic womanhood of Canada."[25] Girl Guides, it was said, would help solve the "tremendous problem in the safe-guarding and protecting of young girls, in the preservation of their Christian Faith and Morality."[26] More specifically, adults were being encouraged to

> ...assume the responsibilites of helping these younger citizens develop a sound mind in a sound body, and assist them in every way to face life equipped with moral stamina, at least a fair measure of practical knowledge of the usual arts of home-making, handicraft, hygiene, and a careful development of the instincts which are natural to childhood, but which must be developed or repressed as the case may be, by prudence and loving supervision.[27]

If the Girl Guides were seen as a non-denominational youth group, the Canadian Girls in Training (C.G.I.T.) were strictly a Protestant group. Its objectives were somewhat less traditional than those of the Girl Guides for while the C.G.I.T. continued to train girls for motherhood, it also concerned itself with teaching political citizenship and asked girls to learn about the Canadian government, women's struggle for the vote and women's influence on legislation.[28] Girls "should

know what injustices prevail, and should be taught to feel responsible for the happiness and well-being of all their fellow citizens''[29] leaders were told. Maternal feminists were conceivably in the making here.[30] The C.G.I.T. encouraged its members in what was called ''a quest for the four-fold life''—the development of the physical, intellectual, spiritual and social spheres of life embodied in the mottoes ''cherish health'', ''seek truth'', ''know God'' and ''serve others''.[31]

How these objectives were actually implemented can be seen in the 1921-23 minute books of one C.G.I.T. group in Edmonton which was affiliated with the McDougall Women's Missionary Society. This group, the ''Alberta Vistas'', had an attendance rate which varied from five to twelve girls. Over the course of two years, the girls took first aid lessons, debated the topic ''Resolve[d] that the factory system is more beneficial to both the manufactorure [*sic*] and individual than the Domestic system'', studied the life of Bliss Carman and read some of his poems, made toy furniture for children in hospital, planned a ''physical night'' of bed-making, changing sheets and bathing patients but had a skating party instead, gave impromptu speeches, engaged in Bible study through reading ''Lives Worth Living'', a description of the friendship of Mary, Martha and Jesus, explored the lives of hymn writers and how hymns came to be written, joined other C.G.I.T. groups for a talk on ''The Growing of Bulbs'' by Mr. Markham of Walter Ramsey's Floral Company, grew bulbs to give to hospitals and decorate the church, attended the city rally of all C.G.I.T. groups, heard a woman missionary talk about her work, made a quilt, gathered donations for Christmas gifts and for a mother of eight from a rural area who wrote asking for clothes, read favourite Bible verses to one another, discussed dress, speech, reading and the use of slang, saw movies of missionary work, sewed, read sections from the 1922 missionary report of the church and talked about a section from ''Canadian Girls' Ideals.''[32] Their leader was clearly trying to build on the four-fold concept of life and conscientiously

organized a wide range of activities for the girls in her care.

While some groups flourished for a time, in the end, most youth groups had a transitory or unstable existence. This was partly because formal youth groups such as the Boy Scouts and Girl Guide were organized and led by adults, most of whom were volunteers, and the continued existence of each group thus depended to a large extent on the dedication, commitment and sustained interest of those adult leaders. In reality, adult involvement was often of a temporary nature as the many comments in church bulletins and reports indicate[33] and all too frequently the burden of organizing activities fell on the shoulders of a handful of already over-extended, though dedicated, church workers. The result of this was that the attention given to the work with teen-agers tended to ebb and flow, a circumstance which might suggest that ultimately adults, in general, were not as concerned as a select few were with supervising and controlling youth's leisure time. Yet another indication of the low commitment to youth work can be found in the fact that even in cases where full-time youth workers were employed, their job security was so low that they did not know from month to month whether they would actually be working with youths.[34] The only real exception can be found in the continuing work of the paid staff of the Y.M.C.A. and the Y.W.C.A.

Annual reports of various churches which assumed responsibility for most of the work with young people indicate that membership in youth groups fluctuated to some considerable degree from year to year. Because the statistics are very spotty and incomplete, it is impossible to calculate how many teen-agers belonged to an organization of any sort at any given point in the 1920s. However, it seems unlikely that a major portion of the approximately 7,000 teen-agers in 1921 or the 12,000 in 1931 were active and continuing participants in any adult-supervised youth group since those records which do remain show very small memberships usually in the range of from five to twenty-five.

The limited impact of youth work can be illustrated by looking at the 1929 Report of the Edmonton District Girl Guides. In that year there were only 223 Guides, 30 Rangers and 141 Brownies registered throughout the district.[35] This is an extremely small percentage of the total female population which fell within the age range available for membership. Even smaller is the number of girls who qualified for badges and, if this is any measure of active involvement, only sixty girls can be so counted.[36] Comparable figures for the Boy Scouts cannot be found for Edmonton though in 1929 there were 4,700 boys registered in Boy Scouts throughout the province of Alberta but only 819 badges were earned.[37] During the 1920s the Edmonton Y.M.C.A. claimed between 400 and 500 boy members a year, many of whom took gym and swimming classes but few of whom enrolled in Bible classes.[38] It seems likely that, while the rhetoric of adolescence argued for the constant and thorough supervision of teen-agers by responsible adults, the reality was quite different.

As has already been noted, the lack of a strong fit between theory and practice was partly due to the unwillingness or inability of adults to voluntarily serve as leaders for youth groups. There is, however, another important consideration which must be taken into account in trying to understand the failure to translate the ideology of boys' and girls' work into practice. Social historians of labour and women have demonstrated the value of viewing all human beings as active creators of their own history and this is a method which should be extended to youths as well.[39] The evidence in Edmonton points quite clearly to the conclusion that boys and girls made conscious decisions about their involvement in youth groups. For example, when youth groups sponsored social events such as dances, attendance was much higher than it was for lectures on character formation and planned activities such as week-long summer camping trips to lakes outside the city attracted far more interest than study sessions on religious books. And the most continually successful

of all adult-sponsored activities were the organized sports teams, physical education classes and the military cadets. The baseball, basketball and hockey teams, the gymnastics and swimming classes and the cadets obviously offered young males, especially, something they wanted and so they chose to participate in large numbers. For example, the McDougall Methodist Church reached 2,000 boys through its baseball clubs but only 800 ever attended Sunday School and that on an irregular basis.[40] Statistics from the Y.M.C.A. tell a similar story. In 1921, of the 425 boy members, 200 took gym classes and 20 enrolled in Bible study. In 1926, of the 397 boy members aged 12 to 17, eighteen attended the lectures and talks given and 39 attended Bible classes. In 1928 the staff at the Y.M.C.A. stopped reporting enrolments in Bible study classes possibly because the statistics were so discouraging or because such classes were discontinued through lack of participant interest.[41] The Y.W.C.A. found that girls were attracted to swimming and gym classes, too, and also gathered at the building for purposes of friendship and camaraderie.[42] The local newspapers record large attendances of youths at sports programs and fairs of all sorts in direct contrast to the much smaller enrolments of teen-agers in organized youth groups. It appears that young people simply resisted many activities designed for their moral uplift and historians who uncritically accept enrolment figures provided by adult leaders as evidence that youth groups were successful in inculcating moral standards and promulgating their world views might be misinterpreting the experiences and motives of young people and confusing intended outcomes with actual ones.[43]

Another dimension of resistance is worth noting as well. Some working class parents, while clearly agreeing that young people needed planned activities during their leisure time, were critical of existing youth groups organized through the schools and churches. These groups, it was suggested, turned the young against the labour movement and failed to deal "with the real problem facing the world today,

that of bringing about a new social order...."[44] In order to counteract the influence of other youth groups, the high schools and the university, Isabel Ringwood, vice-president of the Labor Women's Social and Economic Conference, organized an alternative group designed to cater to youths aged eighteen to twenty-six. That persons as old as twenty-six were still considered "youths" is an interesting comment on the continuing strength of more traditional concepts of age-grouping among some segments of the population. However, organizational efforts of the labour movement were also concentrated on this older group because its members were expected to be out in the work-force and away from the influence of the anti-labour bias of schools and youth groups. More specifically, Ringwood felt that teen-agers could not be expected to interest themselves in serious matters because of the type of lives they were "forced to lead", lives which she must have seen as empty and frivolous.

The youth group established by Ringwood in 1929 sought to instil a more socially conscious note into youthful lives by organizing activities such as debates on topics like "Is a War of Aggression Ever Justifiable?" and "Is Modern Machinery the Most Potent Cause of Unemployment?", discussions of works by Jack London, Upton Sinclair, Frank Anstey, George Bernard Shaw and Edward Bellamy, a dramatic presentation by the "Little Theatre Players" of Elmer Rice's "The Adding Machine" and a visit to the Alberta Legislature though this last experience proved to be so unenlivening that it was not repeated.[45] Despite Ringwood's interest and efforts, however, this alternative youth group does not appear to have experienced any great success and no mention of its existence after 1930 has been found.

While not all working class parents took Ringwood's approach to organizing youth, there is a hint of a rather different, more traditional, approach to be seen in some community leagues such as the one in Norwood which contrasts with the more

structured and supervised approach of the essentially middle class adult sponsored youth group. Many community leagues had teen groups within them but the young organized and implemented their own programs. That is, they were given relative freedom within a broader framework that allowed adults to supervise in a "gentler way" reminiscent of the natural supervision that would occur when age-mixed groups congregated in village squares or at community festivals and celebrations in an earlier period of history. These were the same community league groups that wanted their children to stay within the district for grade nine not because they had any notion of developing ideas about the age-grading and schooling of adolescents but because they wanted their young to be within a neighbourhood where people "looked out for one another".[46]

If adult-organized and supervised youth groups were less than totally successful in attracting the attention of continuously large numbers of teen-agers, other areas of recreational activity did not suffer the same fate. The popularity of sports events and teams, physical education classes and dances has already been mentioned. But one other leisure time activity was taking Edmonton's teen-agers by storm in the 1920s and causing many adults a great deal of worry at the same time. Movies became a major factor in the lives of large numbers of teen-agers. Jean C. well-remembers the warm June night he took a girl to see "Svengali" and stayed out until 1 A.M., an experience which illustrates both how dating was becoming linked to movie-going and why adults might have serious reservations about the negative influences of this new form of mass entertainment.[47]

The importance of movie-going as a leisure time activity for teen-agers is confirmed by a 1933 study of that topic conducted in Edmonton and Calgary by a graduate student completing a Master of Arts degree in psychology.[48] His total sample, 661 students, included 432 students from the McKay Avenue, Queen's Avenue, Rutherford, Westmount, Eastwood High, and Strathcona High schools in

Edmonton and surveyed students in grades six to ten and ranging in average age from 12 to 16. Of the total sample, 36.4% attended movies once a week and another 9.1% of the boys and 8.8% of the girls attended more than once a week. An additional 20.7% of the boys and 17.6% of the girls saw movies at least twice a month. Movies were clearly an important amusement for the young. When asked to identify reasons why they did not go to movies even more often, teen-agers identified lack of money and lack of time as the most significant factors. The majority of young people went to the movies with friends of the same sex, though attendance with siblings was also common and many boys (but not girls) went alone. Most of the young made their own choices about what movies they would attend although girls were a little more closely supervised than boys in the selection process. Further gender differentiation can be seen in the types of movies preferred with boys showing an appreciation for war pictures and movies involving airplanes, boats, trains, cars and motorcycles and girls liking love stories and shows about children. While 56% of the teens responding to the questionnaire thought the movies taught them "to be honorable and do right", 23.6% of the boys and 15.2% of the girls felt movies taught them how to do wrong but not get caught.[49]

It was precisely this last view that was shared by many adults engaged in teaching, social service work and church work. They were convinced that movies were a bad influence on the young because they showed them a range of immoral practices including gangsterism, adultery and smoking and made those practices seem attractive. Movies joined and then exceeded cheap literature and the vaudeville stage as entertainment forms to be soundly condemned and movie censorship became a hot issue in Edmonton as elsewhere.[50]

The debate over movie censorship assumed increased urgency as adults tried to understand why teen-agers from the well-to-do classes should turn to crime. Middle class people could understand why children from poor and immoral homes

would turn to crime; they could not grasp why young people from good, solid homes would engage in vandalism, drunken brawls, thieving and other delinquent activities. In 1921, the Social Service Council of Alberta decided to investigate the case of two boys from good homes who were well supplied with all the necessities of life and yet committed criminal acts. As a result of their inquiry into the lives of these two lads, Council members became convinced that the boys had been motivated to turn to anti-social behaviour through the influence of moving pictures and their "insidious immoral propaganda". The Council called on the government of Alberta to censor and control movies and the advertising for movies in order to protect the young from "irreparable damage in the moral sense".[51] It also called on other groups to take similar action and the Edmonton Public School Board did so by passing a motion which asked the government to exercise strict censorship to eliminate

> ...indecencies in act or speech that tend to pollute the public mind and lower the moral tone of the social order [and moving pictures which show] incidents that tend to emulate crime and make heroes of criminals, to glorify vice and give respectability to immoral acts or in any way ridicule or depreciate the sanctity of the home, and the dignity of the law, whether a moral law or a law of the State.[52]

The government responded to this motion by pointing out that the Association of Provincial Motion Picture Censors already had a set of standards which they applied to all movies shown in the province.[53] Alberta's Board of Censors "condemned" pictures that dealt with "white slavery", seduction of women, assaults upon women for immoral purposes, common-law marriages, adultery, abortion and venereal disease. Pictures that contained gruesome and distressing scenes of violence or scenes of gross drunkeness were also condemned. The Board "disapproved" of moving pictures which dealt with the use of drugs, which showed how criminal acts could be committed, which were set in the underworld, portrayed abuse towards children or animals, ridiculed a race, class, social body or religious group or

displayed vulgar scenes "burlesquing" morgues, funerals, insane asylums, hospitals or houses of ill-repute. Also disapproved were bathing scenes, lewd and immodest dancing, sensuous kissing, women in their night dresses or underclothing, vampire scenes and women in bed together.[54] Thus, from January to September in 1922, for example, movies were condemned for being "too sensuous", "grossly suggestive", "immoral", "very offensive", and "vulgar" and for portraying a "suggestive sex story", "a story of a vampire", "the life of an immoral woman", "a burlesque on clergymen" and "a burlesque on missions".[55]

The Censor Board felt that it was protecting the young from improper and immoral movies but as Jones has shown, the debate on movie censorship continued throughout the 1920s with some community elements arguing that the application of standards was too liberal and others arguing that it was too restrictive.[56] Young people, however, continued to attend the movies in large numbers, an indication that commercialized mass culture was making an impact on teen-agers and helping to create the image of what sociologists call the youth sub-culture.

If the teen-agers' interest in movies and dancing raised the ire of adults, so, too, did certain other activities. Complaints were issued about hockey playing on Sunday[57] and about bands playing for the Sunday afternoon skaters, a practice which was said to keep the young from church.[58] Adults criticized teen-agers for spending too much time on sports and on other "distractions" and not enough on studying.[59] Edmonton experienced something of the "jazz age" and teen-age girls, in particular, were the subject of adult condemnations because of their hair styles and manner of dress. Jean C. remembers that "girls dressed very impractically in short skirts, etc." and thereby caused young men like himself to often be in a state of sexual arousal.[60] He also noted that young men "needed a car to make it with girls"[61] and this suggests that the motor car had started to become the now ubiquitous escape from adult supervision of courting and sexual activities.

Of course, the older generation has always criticized the younger one and accused it of a wide range of crimes from slothfulness through stupidity to immorality. At the same time, youths have been seen as the hope of the future, as the source of cultural continuity.[62] Adult Edmontonians carried on this tradition of ambivalence for while a distinct strand of fear about what the young were coming to runs throughout the historical evidence, so, too, is there a sense of optimism that the future could be made better by youths who were well-educated and trained in "right living". It was to this latter purpose that many adults applied themselves in seeking to over-see the leisure time of teen-agers. Through their work, these adults both publicized new ideas about adolescence and attempted to establish and control standards of behaviour. In the first task they achieved some success but in the second they met resistance from teen-agers, found indifference from many other adults and faced stiff competition from mass-marketed forms of entertainment such as movies and spectator sports.[63]

FOOTNOTES

[1]Sutherland, *Children in English-Canadian Society*; Hareven, "An Ambiguous Alliance"; Rooke, "'The Child Institutionalized"'.

[2]Coulter, "Alberta's Department of Neglected Children,"pp. 31-32.

[3]Morrison, "The Child and Urban Social Reform"; Houston, "The Impetus to Reform".

[4]Coulter, "Alberta's Department of Neglected Children," pp.32-33.

[5]Alberta, Department of Neglected Children, *Annual Reports*, 1909, 1911-1929 (hereafter AR). Chadwick was Superintendent until 1915.

[6]G. Stanley Hall, *Adolescence: Its Psychology and Its Relations to Physiology, Anthropology, Sociology, Sex, Crime, Religion and Education*, 2 volumes (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1904). A shortened, more popular version was issued under the title *Youth: Its Education, Regimen and Hygiene* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1904).

[7]AR, 1911, p. 8.

[8]AR, 1912, p. 22.

[9]AR, 1913, p. 30.

[10]AR, 1912, p. 39.

[11]See Dyhouse, *Girls Growing Up*, pp.115-138 for an interesting discussion of ideas about the differences in male and female adolescence.

[12]Technique as opposed to content or arguments about "just getting the job done" are common among child welfare practioners and among classroom teachers. See, for example, AR, 1909, 1911-1919.

[13]A brief summary of existing youth groups can be found in Betke, "The Development of Urban Community". Both the *Edmonton Journal* and the *Edmonton Bulletin* carried numerous reports of the activities of a wide range of youth groups.

[14]See, for example, Springhall, *Youth, Empire and Society*; Cavallo, *Muscles and Morals*; Macleod, *Building Character*; McKee, "Voluntary Youth Organizations"; Pedersen, "'Keeping Our Good Girls Good'"; Mitchinson, "The Y.W.C.A."; Prang, "'The Girl God Would Have Me Be'".

[15]These views are expressed in editorials and syndicated articles throughout the 1921-1931 period in the *Western Catholic*.

[16]*Western Catholic*, 16 October 1924, p.4 and 25 June 1924, p.5.

[17]"Boy Guidance—The New Profession," *Western Catholic*, 25 June 1925, p.5.

[18]Ibid., p. 6.

[19]*Western Catholic*, 15 July 1926, p. 1.

[20]Ibid., 31 July 1924, p. 1.

[21]See, for example, "Knights Columbus Complete Course in Boy Scout Work," *Western Catholic*, 9 April 1925, pp. 1 and 5.

[22]"The Columbian Squires," *Western Catholic*, 20 October 1927, p. 4.

[23]Public Archives of Canada (hereafter PAC), Girl Guides, MG I 290, Acc. 83/076, Box 1, Organization and Rules of the Canadian Council, Girl Guides Association.

[24]PAA, Sisters, Faithful Companions of Jesus Papers, GA, M1395, File 31, Annals, 1923.

[25]*Western Catholic*, 10 July 1920, p. 8.

[26]Ibid., 24 March 1927, p. 7.

[27]Ibid.

[28]PAC, Y.W.C.A. Files, MG 28, I 198, vol. 40, "Citizenship".

[29]National Girls' Work Board, *Canadian Girls in Training: A Book for Leaders* (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1922), p.39.

[30]On maternal feminism see Linda Kealey, ed., *A Not Unreasonable Claim: Women and Reform in Canada, 1880s to 1920s* (Toronto: The Women's Press, 1979), especially the introduction; Prang, "'The Girl God Would Have Me Be'".

[31]National Girls' Work Board, *Canadian Girls in Training*, p. 18.

[32]PAA, United Church Records, Acc. 75.387, Box UC100, 657/108, Minutes 1921-1923 Edmonton McDougall W.M.S. C.G.I.T. Alta. Vistas.

[33]For example, see PAA, Anglican Church-All Saints Pro- Cathedral, Acc. 76.48, Ed. 15/68, "Annual Report (1931)" where it is reported that for the first time in eight years the Parents' Association of the Guides, Rovers, Scouts, Brownies and Cubs was able to elect "a real live Executive". See also *Western Catholic*, 30 September 1926, p. 8; PAA, United Church Records, Acc. 75,387, Box UC100 657/132, Minutes of Executive Meeting of McDougall United Church 6 January 1929 and UC656/16, "Thirtieth Annual Report, Knox Presbyterian Church, 1923" and "Thirty-fifth Annual Report, Knox Presbyterian Church, 1928". This last report notes that leaders of youth groups did not get the co-operation of many of the parents or church members and officers as a whole.

[34]PAA, United Church Records, Acc. 75.387, Box UC95, File 657/12. There are several examples of youth workers being employed for six month or one year terms.

[35]PAA, Edmonton District Girl Guides, Acc. 68.73, File 68, "Report 1929".

[36]Ibid.

[37]PAC, Boy Scout Records, MG 28, I 73 (Microfilm #C-13940), Boy Scout Annual Reports, 1915-1945.

[38]PAC, Y.M.C.A. Records, MG 28, I 95, vol. 245, Yearbooks.

[39]That people actively create their own history is now a well-recognized factor in social historical writing and has led to a revision of interpretations which show historical actors such as women or members of the working class solely as victims. See, for example, Humphries, *Hooligans or Rebels*?

[40]PAA, United Church Records, Acc. 75.387, Box UC100, 657/100, Minutes McDougall Methodist Church Sunday School-16 May 1921 Annual Meeting.

[41]PAC, Y.M.C.A. Records, MG 28, I 198, vol. 245, Yearbooks.

[42]PAC, Y.W.C.A. Records, MG 28, I 198, vol. 40.

[43]Prang, "'The Girl God Would Have Me Be'"; McKee, "Voluntary Youth Organizations"; Kett, *Rites of Passge* all claim that youth groups had growing memberships.

[44]*Alberta Labour News*, 31 May 1930, p.2.

[45]Ibid.

[46]Interview with Edith S., 12 November 1981; Minutes of the EPSB, 18 November 1920, p. 2474; 17 November 1921, pp. 3266-3267; 18 January 1923, pp. 4969-4970; 20 January 1927, p. 6321 illustrate community league use of the schools to provide physical training and gymnastics classes for teen-aagers.

[47]Interview with Jean C., 2 November 1981.

[48]Elliott Henry Birdsall, "A Questionnaire Investigation of the Reactions of School Children to Moving Picture Shows" (University of Alberta, M.A. thesis, 1933).

[49]Ibid.

[50]David C. Jones, "The Reflective Value of Movies and Censorship on Interwar Prairie Society, " *Prairie Forum* 10 (Fall 1985): 383-398.

[51]Minutes of the EPSB, 5 February 1921, p. 2654.

[52]Ibid., pp. 2655-2656.

[53]Ibid., 15 February 1921, p. 2684.

[54]PAA, Premiers' Papers. Acc. 69.289, File 364, Standards of the Association of Provincial Moving Picture Censors.

[55]Ibid., Pictures Condemned by Alberta Censor Board, Januaary 1st to September 1st, 1922.

[56]Jones , "The Reflective Value".

[57]Minutes of the EPSB, 5 January 1922, pp. 3353-3354.

[58]Ibid., 12 January 1922, pp. 3360-3361.

[59]Ibid., 18 September 1924, pp. 5042 and 5050-5051; 18 September 1928, p. 7029; 30 June 1931, pp. 8477-8478.

[60]Interview with Jean C., 2 November 1981; *Western Catholic*, 6 October 1921, p.2.

[61]Interview with Jean C., 2 November 1981.

[62]Examples of the ambivalence adults felt can be seen by comparing, for example, "Social Services Conf. Held In Edmonton", *Western Catholic*, 17 February 1927, p. 6 and "Edmonton Crime" in CEA Newspaper Clipping Collection, Acc. A77/18, Box 17, clipping dated 6 November 1930.

[63]Carl Betke, "Sports Promotion in the Western Canadian City: The Example of early Edmonton," *Urban History Review/Revue d'histoire urbaine* XII (October 1983): 47-56.

CHAPTER SIX

DEALING WITH DELINQUENT TEEN-AGERS

In 1909 the Alberta Legislature passed *An Act for the Protection of Neglected and Dependent Children*[1]. Known as *The Children's Protection Act*, it became the first major piece of welfare legislation in the new province and, in conjunction with the Dominion's *Juvenile Delinquents Act* (1908), defined the legal and administrative framework for both the province's and municipalities' work with young people who were considered to be deviant or at least in danger of becoming so without state intervention in their lives.[2] Within five years of the passage of the Act, the City of Edmonton had established the requisite facilities and had a voluntary Children's Aid Society and a small group of paid staff to undertake the work involved with caring for dependent, neglected and delinquent children. Furthermore, because the provincial Department of Neglected Children was housed in Edmonton, the provincial capital, a great deal of co-operation and over-lap occurred between the work of the two levels of government.[3]

Because the activities of the Department of Neglected Children in the provincial context have been studied elsewhere[4] and because it is the specific nature of work with young people in Edmonton that is of interest here, the focus of this chapter will be on the actual practices of the municipal social welfare system as it dealt with young people. Unfortunately, it is often extremely difficult to examine the impact of this sytem on teen-agers since most of them were considered "children" within the meaning of *The Children's Protection Act.* The 1909 Act defined a "child" as "a boy or girl actually or apparently under sixteen years of age", an age definition which was modified to seventeen in 1910 and eighteen in

1916. As a result, teen-agers as an age cohort are lost in most of the statistics emanating from either the city or the province. Furthermore, the first Superintendent of Neglected Children in Alberta noted

> The problems of dependent and delinquent children are so closely interwoven that they have been made as one as far as circumstances will permit in the Province of Alberta.[5]

In practice, then, both dependent and delinquent "children" fell under the more inclusive term "neglected" and this usage makes it especially difficult to determine with any precision just what brought young people of any age to the attention of authorities. For example, evidence suggests that many young women appeared in the juvenile court under the charge of being a "neglected child" even though the "real" charge against them was sexual immorality. Despite this, the fragmentary records of the Edmonton juvenile court provide one of our best insights into attitudes towards and treatment of teen-agers who deviated from the acceptable forms of behaviour established not only by the law but by the understanding magistrates and other authorities had of community standards, of "what was proper".

The cases of two sixteen year olds who appeared in juvenile court before Magistrate Emily Murphy in 1917 well-illustrate important aspects of the ways in which teen-agers came to be defined as deviant and once so-defined were dealt with by the legal and social service system of the city and province. Walter R. was charged with stealing $30.00 though testimony in the court suggested that he had been involved in various previous thefts over a period of eighteen months. He lived at home with his grandmother and widowed mother who was employed at Ramsey's Department Store and had, until his crime was discovered, worked as a messenger and delivery boy for the Remington Typewriter Company at a salary of $7.00 per week. After hearing the evidence, Magistrate Murphy found him guilty and gave him a six month sentence at the Portage La Prairie Reformatory, the institution for

delinquent boys used by Alberta in the absence of one of its own. However, Murphy suspended the sentence provided that Walter reported weekly to a probation officer and made full restitution of the money he had stolen.[6] In his behaviour Walter was typical of the young men who came to the attention of the authorities for teen-aged male delinquents were most often charged with theft, break and entry or vandalism; that is, they were most likely to be seized on property-related charges.[7]

Similarly, Ethel T.'s case was typical of that of most young women who tended to reach court on morals charges of one sort or another.[8] Ethel specifically appeared before Murphy because she was charged with being "a neglected child within the meaning of the *Children's Protection Act of Alberta*".[9] In fact it is clear from the court transcript that she was the victim of a male adult who tried to rape her yet it was her conduct and not his that came under scrutiny. On the night of the incident which brought her to Murphy's court, Ethel had left the home where she was a domestic servant at a wage of $14.00 a month, to visit a married friend, Mrs. V., who had invited her to a house dance. Because the dance did not end until 1:30 A.M., Mrs. V. invited Ethel and her friend Addie to stay the night. After she had retired for the night, a male boarder at the V.'s entered Ethel's room and bed and attempted to force her to engage in intercourse. Under the pretext of getting a glass of water, Ethel managed to escape and ran to her friend's bed. The man, however, followed her and got into the bed with both girls and then violently tried to get rid of Addie. On hearing the commotion, Mrs. V. entered the room but reportedly did little to protect Ethel or Addie and, in fact, encouraged Ethel to give in to the man and promised to pay her some money in the morning if she did so. Ethel, however, refused whereupon the man, De Witt,

> ...took me by the feet and he took me by the arm and took me back to the other room, and he put me on the bed, and he tried to get the advantage of me, he had his underwear open and was holding it aside with his hand, then I fought and got him off and I went back to Addie. Then he goes and calls Lee Thomas, who was upstairs, and before that he said he would kick my teeth down my throat, and he hit me in the eye, so he goes and calls Lee Thomas and sayd [*sic*] "Come on down, we're going to fix these girls, but don't let her sass you like this one has."[10]

Ethel's testimony ends here so it is impossible to determine whether in the end she was actually raped. Magistrate Murphy's response is, however, all too clear for, in making Ethel a ward of the Department of Neglected Children, she delivered a resounding lecture to Ethel which is reproduced here at some length in order to illustrate the feelings of at least some authorities about the ways in which teen-agers should behave.

> I think you need a good sound thrashing, since you were three years old your step-mother has taken care of you [*sic*]. She is a good, hard-working christian [*sic*] woman, she has dressed you, worked for you and fed you, and I have seen her these last months fretting and worrying about you, and you were running absolutely wild and running away from her.
>
> They say a thankless child is like a serpant's [*sic*] tooth, you are not returning your mother anything, but are bringing disgrace and shame oupon [*sic*] her....Now you have got to obey me, you have evaded your mother but you can't get away from me. I am going to make you a Ward of the Department and that means that you belong to the Court instead of your mother, and if you don't do as they [*sic*] tell you, and if you run around with those fast men, and with girls like Cutie Wade, they will lock you up. If you are not absolutely obedient, if you are flighty or stay out late at night, I shall know about it and you will be locked up.[11]

While Walter R. was also subjected to a lecture which made frequent reference to thrashings and to filial responsibilities and which promised that Murphy would "see that you behave yourself", it ended on a much softer note.

> I am going to watch you and ask how you are getting along. Take up some of your mother's burden and take your father's place in the household and support and take care of your mother. Try that Walter and don't come back here again.[12]

Among other things, these two cases re-emphasize the point previously made about the gendered nature of theories of "adolescence". Adolescence was (and is) an essentially masculine construct that relied on images of storm and stress, restlessness and searching and struggles for independence and self-knowledge. As Barbara Hudson has convincingly argued, it is a construct which significantly contradicts the "femininity" construct which is based on a discourse of passivity and dependence and so young women get very mixed messages from the adults in their lives.[13] Girls cannot be "adolescents" without endangering their femininity. Ultimately, it means, in fact, that society imposes different standards of behaviour on teen-aged boys and girls and it is this double standard which is so well-reflected in Murphy's responses to Walter and Ethel. Walter would grow up to be a man and his youthful indiscretions could be left behind. On losing her virtue, however, Ethel would be marked for life and thus she, like all young females had to be treated much more harshly, had to be controlled much more stringently. As the Superintendent of Neglected Children put it, girls could lose "all that was valuable in their lives" before they realized "the sacredness of preserving the purity of their bodies and of their minds."[14] Furthermore,

> A boy who makes a mistake is welcomed back into society, and there is rarely any difficulty in finding a good private home for him. A girl who has gone wrong has lost so much that it would be difficult to regain her place in society, even if society were as ready to welcome her as her erring brother. The fact is that she is not so welcomed.[15]

The *Western Catholic* added the observation that most young girls had not lived long enough "to know the matrimonial market value of virtue and innocence nor the beauty value of it."[16] And, of course, as one observer noted, girls were treated more harshly for sex crimes because the consequences of their behaviour were so

glaringly obvious and made a significant contribution to the social problem of illegitimate births.[17]

Besides highlighting the differentiated definitions of deviancy and treatment accorded to young males and females, Murphy's lectures to both youths reveal a strongly traditional view of punishment. In both instances she made reference to the utility of a "good thrashing", a view which she reiterated in other cases. For example, in 1921, a young woman serving time in the Fort Saskatchewan Gaol wrote to Murphy with the following plea.

> Mrs. Murphy please don't order anymore whippings for me. Sargent gave me such a hard whipping I shall never forget it. I have come to the conclusion I have been a bad girl but will be a good girl when I get out.[18]

This letter was signed "With lots of love from your little girl Margaret."[19] Murphy replied that she had not ordered the whipping "but if you got one, I have no doubt in the world that it was well deserved as apparently you are behaving yourself better."[20]

Murphy's belief in the efficacy of corporal punishment was not, however, universally shared by other Edmontonians who were engaged in working with delinquent youth. Reports from the city's Children's Aid Department emphasize the importance of "reformative rather than punitive work in the uplifting of childhood".[21] Brother Rogatian, the Rector of St. Joseph's College, specifically argued that corporal punishment was unnecessary in dealing with young people who, after all, were possessed of reason and only required guidance and control and should not be driven and coerced.[22] Rev. Father Carleton, an Associate Judge of a Juvenile Court, argued that most so-called delinquents were more sinned against than sinning and that an appeal to them to do right was usually all that was needed to bring about a reform in behaviour.[23] Several other people including Dr. Folinsbee, Bishop Gray (who had served eighteen years as a juvenile court judge in

Edmonton), Field Secretary Solway of the Alberta Boy Scouts and Secretary Forsythe of the Y.M.C.A.'s Boys' Department also put forward similar views.[24]

Of course, this latter view was consistent with that expressed by the child savers and social reformers across North America who claimed their goal was preventive, not punitive.[25] Indeed, from the records that are available it is possible to conclude that many teen-agers running afoul of the law in the 1920s were, in fact, treated with understanding and consideration as the following cases illustrate. Lawrence D., a young immigrant who had been brought to Canada by the Dominion government as part of a scheme to provide labour for the farms of western provinces, had drifted into Edmonton in 1929 after his assignments to farms around Wetaskiwin had been completed. Despite tramping the country-side around the city in search of farm work, work he was willing to take in exchange for room and board alone, he was unsuccessful in finding employment. One Saturday afternoon he entered the Dominion Pool Room and tired out from walking miles in search of a job, he fell asleep. When he awoke the place was in darkness. While looking for something to eat, Lawrence chanced upon a tin containing $150.00. He took this money and five cakes of chocolate, two of which he immediately ate, and left the pool room only to run right into a policeman in the back alley. Before the officer even had a chance to inquire into Lawrence's doings, the boy handed over the stolen money and chocolate. He was charged and convicted of theft but the magistrate, on hearing the boy's story from Adjutant Sutherland Stewart of the Salvation Army, remanded the sentence for three months. Within a week, Adjutant Stewart had found work for Lawrence on a farm two hundred and sixty-five miles south-east of Edmonton, had paid the boy's transportation costs to get there and had heard from the farmer that the boy was giving satisfactory service. "I am confident that this boy will make good," said Stewart[26] whose "fatherly" intervention in the case is a good illustration of the way in which volunteers were expected to act as a

crucial part of the social welfare mechanisms outlined in *The Children's Protection Act.*

In another 1929 case, two lawyers intervened on behalf of a seventeen year old boy, Richard S., who had been sentenced to pay a fine of $300.00 for the illegal possession of moonshine liquor. Richard had been with two older boys, both of whom had escaped arrest, and thus had been left "holding the bag" although, as the lawyers pointed out, "This boy obviously was not a bootlegger nor anything like it, and seemed to have been led astray."[27] In seeking a remission of the fine, the lawyers talked to the magistrate, the Chief of Police and a representative of the Attorney-General's Department pointing out not only that the fine seemed excessive under the circumstances but also that the boy's father was an unemployed teamster who had a wife and six children to support from the earnings he could make doing odd jobs as they became available. It would be impossible for the family to pay out the $300.00 and the boy would be forced to go to gaol for three months if a remission was not granted even though, in the lawyers' view "substantial justice" had already been done in the case with the boy having spent a day in confinement and receiving some injuries in the scuffle surrounding the arrest. In the end, the lawyers were not successful in obtaining a complete remission but the fine was reduced to $20.00 as the court felt the father could pay that sum.[28]

In a somewhat similar case in 1930, an eighteen year old by the name of Frank L. who repaired and sold second-hand bicycles was found guilty of running a business without a license and fined $10.00 and costs of $7.95. Neither he nor his family could afford to pay the fine so a group of the family's friends approached the mayor of the city, J.M. Douglas, to intervene on Frank's behalf. In a letter to the sentencing magistrate, P.C.H. Primrose, Mayor Douglas argued that the fine should be forgiven by the court on the following grounds.

> From my inquiries as to this boy I find that he is a student at school in his eleventh grade and I would feel that it might be an injustice if he were compelled to go to jail as there seems to be no reasonable way in which he can raise the money. He has two sisters also attending high school and the ambition of the family appears to be to get an education. For this they must not be condemned.
>
> I trust you can see your way clear to let the boy off with the costs of the Court and I have no doubt that if he is guilty of doing something which he should not have done that this will prove a very costly lesson to him.[29]

In this instance, a full remission of the fine was secured for Frank.

A cynical person might well be led to observe that all these cases involve young males who appear in the court records as fairly respectable boys who were not challenging the sytem and who seem committed to hard work and school. There is no doubt that the middle-class magistrates and other authorities were more sympathetic to teen-agers and their families if those persons appeared to be grateful for the help of their "benefactors". As with the dichotomy between the deserving and undeserving poor, some adults seemed to distinguish between teen-agers on a similar plane; that is, they made judgments about the character of the young delinquents on the basis of the degree of respect and gratitude those delinquents displayed towards the authorities. A delinquent youth was allowed to transgress once, maybe even twice, but further recidivism led to the labelling of that youth as "hardened". When this happened, he/she could expect little sympathy from the court since that individual was clearly demonstrating his/her ungratefulness.[30]

If some authorities were inclined to treat delinquent youths with understanding because of an ideological commitment to reform rather than punishment, it must also be acknowledged that financial considerations played a large role in keeping young people out of institutions and in their natural or foster homes. Both the provincial and municipal governments were parsimonious and then, as now, social welfare activities were under-funded and under-staffed, at least according to the officials employed in the field. In 1923, for example, it cost an estimated $2,000.00

for each teen-aged boy who was sentenced to serve time in the Portage La Prairie Reformatory[31] and hence a much preferred course of action was to assign a suspended sentence and compulsory supervision by a probation officer. Even then, lack of funds to hire probation officers and the failure of sufficient numbers of volunteers to serve in the role meant that realistically many youthful escapades that were technically delinquent acts were ignored or resulted in little more than a warning from some official.

A case-in-point occurred in April, 1930 when Juvenile Officer H. Gutteridge found four teen-aged girls drinking at a house party with a group of older men. The girls were under the legal age for drinking and at least one was found with a man in the back seat of a car outside the house. All the girls gave statements to the police in which they admitted they had been drinking but in the end no charges were laid and three of the girls were taken home and handed into the care of their parents who "hoped there would be no further trouble about this matter."[32] The fourth girl, the daughter of the woman in whose house the party had been held, was kept over night in the Good Shepherd Home, a shelter for "wayward" girls, but returned to her mother after Mrs. W. promised no more parties would take place and no more men would be allowed to visit.[33] Other police reports also show a heavy reliance on the warning of boys and their parents as a means of dealing with a wide variety of delinquent acts.[34]

In fact it is difficult to determine just how much of a problem juvenile delinquency among teen-agers was in Edmonton. A complete run of reports for the period from 1921 to 1931 is not available but reports for the years 1926 to 1928 inclusive all make the observation that "nothing abnormal" occurred with regard to juvenile crime.[35] In 1926, according to these reports, 161 young people appeared in juvenile court, in 1927 there were 156 cases and in the following year 115.[36] A more complete report for 1928 revised this last figure up to 127 while indicating

that 58 cases were heard under The Children's Protection Act and 69 under The Juvenile Delinquents Act.[37] Of the 69 young people charged as juvenile delinquents, 32 were charged with break and entry, 23 with with theft, 8 with willful damage, 4 with infractions of by-laws, 1 with cruelty and 1 with forgery. Of the 69, 43 were teen-agers aged 13 to 15, 10 were aged 12 and the rest ranged in age from 8 to 11. Of the cases heard, only two were dismissed. Three boys were sent to Portage La Prairie, 28 youths were put on probation, 10 received a suspended sentence, 7 were made wards, 7 were fined and 12 received a reprimand. Of the 58 young people brought before the juvenile court as "neglected", 28 were teen-agers ranging in age from 13 to 16.[38] Clearly the proportion of the total population appearing in juvenile court was very small although it must be allowed that in the same period the probation officer engaged in 6,113 interviews and visits.[39]

Between 1 October 1932 and 30 September 1933, however, the number of cases appearing in juvenile court increased markedly to 333 and increased again in the following twelve months to 357.[40] The most pronounced increase was found in the category of those young people charged with theft, a fact which lends support to the contemporary observations that crime waves were directly linked to worsening economic conditions.[41] Interestingly enough, when the crime rates began to rise as early as 1930, the response of a wide variety of people in the community, though they recognized that economic conditions were causing crime, was not sympathy but a call for "law and order". Magistrate P.C.H. Primrose, previously a supporter of the reform rather than punishment school, began promising stiff sentences and the lash. A. Farmilo of the Alberta Federation of Labor called for a strengthening of the police force and reminded Edmonton's citizens that he had warned them about the possibility of a crime wave due to economic conditions a full year previously. E.E. Owen of the Edmonton Trades and Labor Council, while suggesting that over-

generalizations about the causes of crime should be avoided, observed that society had a problem with the hero-worship of criminals so that a "jail bird" was no longer considered a social outcast and "youths with too much spare time on their hands are prone to follow his example."[42] A prominent businessman and head of a major financial institution claimed "Most of these would-be bandits are probably boys in their 'teens who dread the lash and it would soon end these hold-ups."[43]

This apparently rapid shift in attitudes towards teen-agers on the part of a wide spectrum of spokespeople provides an interesting comment on the ambivalence adults must have felt about the young. It is not at all clear why youths should be targetted for such hostility in a time of financial insecurity, particularly when adults seemed to recognize that need rather than greed caused the young to steal and that much as Stephen Humphries has convincingly claimed, a significant portion of juvenile crime was "social crime".[44] By this he means that a great part of youthful stealing was done in order to supplement family economies. Pilfering from the corner store or raiding a vegetable garden, for example, brought in additional food. Shoplifting or stealing from a clothes line added wearing apparel to the family wardrobe. Other forms of illegal activity also helped the family get by as the case of this specific Edmonton boy illustrates. He was eventually caught and charged with shoplifting but he had begun his life of "crime" by sweeping up the remnants of wheat left in railroad box cars. This he would sell for a little money and it was only after this route to additional family income was closed that he turned to stealing from stores.[45] For this youth, like many others, theft was a strategy for survival.

We have already seen how young women were often forced to turn to prostitution or to exchange sexual favours for room and board. For these young women and for others who were victims of incest, sexual assault or broken promises of marriage and subsequently found themselves pregnant, Edmonton offered some

limited services. Although Alice B. and some of her friends had resorted to back-street abortions to terminate unwanted pregnancies, other girls, either not knowing how to seek an abortion or not wishing to have one, found what at least appears to be a supportive environment in which to see their pregnancies through to term in the form of the Beulah Home. Although the Good Shepherd Home served delinquent and "wayward" girls, it does not appear that unwed mothers were cared for there during the 1920s.[46]

The annual reports of the Beulah Home demonstrate quite clearly that the majority of unwed mothers at the home were teen-agers. In September of 1927 for example, the average age of the girls was 17 and of the total number of 18 clients, 17 were twenty years of age or younger. Some of the girls were as young as fourteen.[47]

In trying to summarize the causes which brought young women to the Beulah Home, Matron Mary A. Finlay indicted the public dance as the key cause followed by drink and cigarettes and exacerbated by the currently fashionable forms of dress. In addition, lack of discipline in the girl's home or lack of self-confidence were blamed for leaving the girl to drift "whichever way the winds of her fancies and associations have blown her." Finally, the matron acknowledged some "little girl mothers" had been more sinned against than sinning but would say no more because these cases were too tragic to recount.[48] The 1926 Annual Report suggests that it is difficult to explain why these girls became pregnant except that

> ...we can tell of foolish plans and groundless ambitions, then of the bitterest disappointments and broken promises; we can further tell of the dissipation of the beer halls, the beer parties, the cigarettes and the public dance halls.[49]

The numbers of women using the services of the Beulah Home generally increased over the decade though there were some notable fluctuations. In 1922 forty-three girls were cared for, a number which slowly crept up to a high of

ninety-two in 1931.[50] A more detailed analysis of the girls admitted in 1931 showed that 24 were "New Canadians", 16 were of German or Scandinavian origin, 9 were French and 43 had British or American backgrounds. Domestic service had occupied 34 of the girls, 24 had been at home, 13 were engaged in cafe work, 7 were students, 6 were stenographers, 4 were clerks , 2 were teachers and 2 were telephone operators. Furthermore, the report noted that fully 60% of the unwed mothers kept their babies, a figure which had remarkably increased over the decade.[51] The 1925 Annual Report had observed that the public was beginning to accept the fact that the young mothers wished to keep their babies and because the Beulah Home offered low cost or free child care at least for the first year when the young women went out to work, the practical realities of combining a job with a baby were made easier.[52]

However, Emily Murphy, at least, felt that teen-aged mothers should give up their illegitimate babies for several reasons. She felt that a baby would be adopted because it was wanted and thus would get a better start in life than it would with a single parent. Furthermore, once adopted, no stigma of illegitimacy would be attached to the baby. Finally, it would be best for the young, unwed mother since she would not have a baby marking her as easy prey for unscrupulous men.[53] For one young woman at least who had taken Murphy's advice, however, the decision caused great pain. Stella B. wrote to Murphy to thank her for her help and support but also to say "Never advise a girl to give up her baby as I'm sure every girl's life is ruined when she loses her baby." Stella reported that her baby was constantly on her mind and "Oh how I wish I had never given her up." She ended her letter with the plea "...if you hear anymore about little Margaret will you let me know."[54]

Although it is always risky to rely on documents produced by an institution to justify its existence and solicit funds to support its work, the statistics provided by the Beulah Home as a result of its follow-up work on 292 girls cared for between

1922 and 1928 merit some consideration. Of the girls contacted, 51% were at home with their parents or were "earning an honest living", 31% were married and living in "established homes of their own", 8% were still in the home, 5% had "not made good" and 3% could not be located.[55] By the traditional methods of measurement, the "success rate" of the Beulah Home was high and large numbers of the girls were appropriately integrated back into the community. This is not so surprising since the workers at the Beulah Home and the sisters at the Good Shepherd Home who worked with girls convicted of sex crimes, sexual immorality, incorrigibility and "waywardness" took an active, interventionist approach in several respects. Although both institutions were forced to operate on very limited funds, attempts were made to provide training or continuing education of various sorts for the girls which would enable them to secure employment on leaving the homes. Insofar as possible workers at the homes also helped girls find work and provided some follow-up support. As one of the Sisters at the Good Shepherd Home indicated, "We are trying to help them to get on their feet again....They are practically all such nice girls—all they need is guidance, and someone to have faith in them."[56] The role of the Beulah Home in providing child care for the girls who chose to keep their babies and return or enter the paid work-force has already been mentioned. This practical assistance, offered because the home recognized that the wages girls could earn would not allow them to pay the rates charged by other institutions providing child care, must have gone a long way to helping girls "make good."

Although there is a danger of romanticizing the work of women helping women, the cases of the Beulah Home and the Good Shepherd Home do intimate that for some girls, at least, the essentially all-woman environment was supportive and healing. Indeed, one description of life at the Beulah Home shows the wide range of activities that were offered to the girls. Although they were all expected to

work within the institution while staying there, whether in the kitchen, the laundry, the nursery or the garden, there were also birthday parties, Hallowe'en parties, berry-picking excursions to the country, games and sing-songs. Girls worked together and played together, laughed and cried, supported each other through illness and the decisions that had to be made about the future of the babies.[57] A similar camaraderie seems to have existed for girls in the Good Shepherd Home since it was reported that girls frequently returned to visit at the home after they had been released.[58]

What the treatment of these delinquent girls demonstrates, as do the numerous other cases cited above, is the reasonably understanding, the essentially common-sense approach taken by most adults to young people who had deviated from the accepted or legislated norms of society. While teen-agers might expect stern lectures about the duties they owed to their parents, while magistrates and others might express their frustrations over property damage, thievery and the moral looseness of the young with threats of lashes and incarceration, in the end, adults in authority basically assumed the role of stern parents warning the young to straighten up and see the errors of their ways. That is, the handling of juvenile delinquency in Edmonton suggests that most adults saw their task as one in which they helped teen-agers to stay out of trouble and move smoothly into adulthood. Although they would probably not have articulated it in this way, adults behaved in ways which suggested that they saw human development as a continuous process of growth towards adulthood. For the most part, juvenile authorities were as yet untouched by the "scientific" approach to juvenile delinquency although by the end of the 1920s a clinic for psychological testing had been established at the University of Alberta and the mental hygiene movement was gaining some prominence, although primarily in work with children who were deemed "sub-normal".[59]

That Edmonton had not yet incorporated scientific ideas and adopted "modern" methods of treating juvenile delinquents is further suggested in a letter written in 1933 by Charlotte Whitton, the doyen of child welfare in Canada at the time.[60] Of Edmonton, she said, "...few of our larger cities [are] as disorganized or as ill-organized...[there is] very little social work that can be called social work."[61] Furthermore, said Whitton, the city had practically no trained workers, no community planning and it was impossible to get groups together to design proper programs.[62] This assessment of Edmonton reiterates what a 1929 survey of social services concluded[63] and reinforces the view a graduate student at the University of Alberta took when he tried to apply the "scientific" theories about delinquency he had learned from social scientists such as Burt, the Gleucks, Adler, Thrasher and Van Waters to the data he collected in Edmonton and Alberta. He commented

> It is very difficult to understand how a boy could appear before a juvenile court and an appropriate sentence could be passed, if no more was known about the boy than the files reveal.[64]

Furthermore, after visiting the Department of Neglected Children in Edmonton to find out what methods were used to deal with delinquents he felt compelled to say

> ...in my opinion, in the City of Edmonton at least, the whole scheme is characterized by a lack of scientific plan ...Human sympathy and industry may go a long way in dealing with delinquents, but unless there is behind them a scientific method, they may be applied at the wrong time and in the wrong place, and thus do more harm than good.[65]

From this, then, we can conclude that "modern" ideas about adolescence, reliant as they are on the teachings of psychology, had had little impact in Edmonton on the practice of adults engaged in working with delinquent teen-agers. More traditional notions of rescue and philanthropy, of reform and punishment dominated and much behaviour that was technically delinquent was dealt with through grave warnings and stern lectures, often both to the young and their parents. Scientific testing, categorization, labelling and professional counselling and therapy

had not yet entered the lives of Edmonton's juvenile delinquents.

FOOTNOTES

[1]Alberta, *An Act for the Protection of Neglected and Dependent Children*, 1909, 9 Edward VII, c. 12.

[2]David Edgar Lysne, "Welfare in Alberta, 1905-1936," (M. A. thesis, University of Alberta, 1966); Sutherland, *Children in English-Canadian Society*; Coulter, "Alberta's Department of Neglected Children".

[3]PAC, Records of Canadian Council of Social Development, MG 28, I 10, Vol. 43, File 212, "A Survey of Social Services in the City of Edmonton, Alberta, August, 1929"; Alberta, Department of Neglected Children, *Annual Reports*.

[4]Coulter, "Alberta's Department of Neglected Children"; Coulter, "'Not to Punish But To Reform'".

[5]AR, 1909, p.9.

[6]CEA, Emily Murphy Papers, MS 2, Box 1, File 13, Walter R. case, 31 October 1917.

[7]Coulter, "Alberta's Department of Neglected Children," p. 72.

[8]Ibid.

[9]CEA, Emily Murphy Papers, MS 2, Box 1, File 15, Ethel T. case, 17 January 1917.

[10]Ibid.

[11]Ibid.

[12]CEA, Emily Murphy Papers, MS 2, Box 1, File 13, Walter R. case, 31 October 1917.

[13]Barbara Hudson, "Femininity and Adolescence," in *Gender and Generation*, ed. Angela McRobbie and Mica Nava (London: Macmillan Publishers Limited, 1984), pp.31-53.

[14]AR, 1918, p. 38.

[15]AR, 1916, p. 14.

[16]"Mothers to Blame for Daughters' Acts," *Western Catholic*, 6 October 1921, p. 2.

[17]AR, 1911, p. 26.

[18]CEA, Emily Murphy Papers, MS 2, Box 1, File 10, G. to Murphy, 5 June 1921.

[19]Ibid.

[20]Ibid., Murphy to G., 16 June 1921.

[21]CEA, City of Edmonton Annual Ratepayers' Meetings, Report by City Commissioners, 31 October 1926 (uncatalogued); CEA, City Commissioners Files, RG 11, Class 3, File 1, Report from M. Gutteridge, 22 November 1927.

[22]"Social Service Conf. Held In Edmonton", *Western Catholic*, 17 February 1927, p. 6.

[23]Ibid.

[24]CEA, Newspaper Clippings Collection, "Organizations-Edmonton Welfare Council 1927-40", Acc. A77/18, Box 52, "Cottage Home System Suggested for Care of Delinquent Boys," 3 February 1927.

[25]For a useful review of some of the more recent works in the Canadian context see John Bullen, "Orphans, Lunatics and Historians: Recent Approaches to the History of Child Welfare in Canada," *Histoire Sociale/Social History* XVIII (May 1985): 133-145.

[26]CEA, Commissioners' Files, Police Crime 1926-1966, Acc. 73-52, Box 195, Statement of Adjutant Sutherland Stewart, 15 July 1929.

[27]CEA, Commissioners' Files, Police Crime 1926-1966, Acc. 73-52, Box 195, Abstract of Letter Dated 20 April 1929 From Messrs. Wood and Buchanan.

[28]Ibid.

[29]CEA, Commissioners' Files, Police Crime 1926-1966, Acc. 73-52, Box 195, Douglas to Primrose, 14 August 1930.

[30]See AR, 1909, 1911-1919; general correspondence in PAA, Department of the Attorney-General, General Administrative Files, Acc. 72.369, Box 4; PAA, Department of Neglected Children Files, Acc. 75.126, Box 124, File 6-C-5,

Primrose to Browning, 2 December 1920 and Bryan to Browning, 8 December 1920.

[31]PAA, Department of Neglected Children Files, Acc. 72.369, Box 123, File 6-C-5, McLeod to Browning, 12 May 1923.

[32]CEA, Commissioners' Files, Police Crime 1926-1966, Acc. 73-52, Box 195, Gutteridge to Shute, 16 April 1930.

[33]Ibid.

[34]CEA, Commissioners' Files, Police Crime 1926-1966, Acc. 73-52, Box 195, "Special Report, City Police Dept.", 28 November 1930.

[35]CEA, City of Edmonton Annual Ratepayers' Meetings, Report by City Commissioners, 31 October 1926 (uncatalogued); CEA, RG 11, Class 3, File 1, Gutteridge to City Commissioners, 22 November 1927 and File 2, Magee to City Commissioners.

[36]Ibid.

[37]CEA Library, Item 352 E, "Public Assistance Section Special Statistical Report."

[38]Ibid.

[39]Ibid.

[40]Ibid.

[41]CEA, Newspaper Clippings Collection, "Edmonton Crime", Acc. A77/18, Box 17, "Citizens Demand Swift Action" and "Urge Special Squad to Meet Emergency", 6 November 1930.

[42]Ibid.

[43]Ibid.

[44]Humphries, *Hooligans or Rebels?*, chapter 6; Nasaw, *Children of the City.*

[45]Hermin Lewis King, "A Study of 400 Juvenile Delinquent Recidivists Convicted in the Province of Alberta During the Years 1920-30," (M.A. thesis, University of Alberta, 1932), p. 38.

[46]PAC, Records of the Canadian Council on Social Development, MG 28, I 10, Vol. 43, File 212, 1929 Social Survey of Edmonton; "The Good Shepherd Home," *Western Catholic*, 4 September 1924, p. 3.

[47]PAA, Beulah Home Records, Acc. 71.47, Box 1 (hereafter Beulah), File 1, "Beulah Home-For Broken and Homeless Lives," 14 October 1927.

[48]Beulah, File 1, "Beulah Home Report", September 1924.

[49]Beulah, File 1, "Beulah Home Annual Report" 14 February 1927.

[50]Beulah, Files 1 and 2.

[51]Beulah, File 2, "Statistics Made Up for 1931".

[52]Beulah, File 1, "Beulah Home Report", 26 January 1926.

[53]CEA, Emily Murphy Papers, MS 2, Box 1, File 17, Murphy to Whitton, 2 January 1920.

[54]CEA, Emily Murphy Papers, MS 2 , Box 1, File 1, Stella B. to Murphy, 6 June 1919.

[55]Beulah, File 2, Letter Appealing for Funds, April 1928.

[56]Quoted in "The Good Shepherd Home," *Western Catholic*, 4 September 1924, p. 3.

[57]Beulah, File 5, "Problems and Struggles of Life at Beulah Home".

[58]"The Good Shepherd Home," *Western Catholic*, 4 September 1924, p. 3.

[59]King, "A Study of 400 Juvenile Delinquents"; UAA, Mental Hygiene Files, Acc. 69-33-57 and John Malcolm MacEachran Papers, Acc. 71-217.

[60]On Charlotte Whitton's child welfare career see the following by Patricia T. Rooke and R. L. Schnell. "Child Welfare in English Canada, 1920-1948," *Social Service Review* 55 (September 1981): 484-506; "Making the Way More Comfortable: Charlotte Whitton's Child Welfare Career 1920-48," *The Journal of Canadian Studies* XVII (Winter 1982-83): 33-45; "Charlotte Whitton Meets the 'Last Best West': The Politics of Child Welfare in Alberta, 1929-1949," *Prairie Forum* (Fall 1981): 143-163; *No Bleeding Heart—Charlotte Whitton: A Feminist on the Right* (Vancouver: The University of British Columbia Press, 1987).

[61]PAC, Records of the Canadian Council on Social Development, MG 28, I 10, Vol. 6, File 31, Whitton to Witherspoon, 29 August 1933.

[62]Ibid.

[63]PAC, Records of the Canadian Council on Social Development, MG 28, I 10, Vol. 43, File 212, 1929 Social Survey of Edmonton.

[64]King, "A Study of 400 Juvenile Delinquents," p. 6.

[65]Ibid., pp. 7-8.

CHAPTER SEVEN

CONCLUSION

To the extent that the sources have allowed us to develop a sense of what it meant to be a teen-ager in Edmonton in the 1920s, it can only be concluded that the "modern" concept of adolescence, while not totally absent, was far from universally understood or accepted in this small western Canadian city. One is struck not by any discontinuity in youthful experiences but by the persistence of more traditional forms, albeit forms in transition. An examination of the indicators historians have argued are necessary to demonstrate the presence of a modern concept of adolescence—that is, age-segregation and grading, delayed responsibility and a dependent status for the young and an adult conviction that youths needed careful supervision of all aspects of their lives—suggests that new and old ideas and practices co-existed in Edmonton in ways which made the experiences of growing up both traditional and "modern" at one and the same time. That is, there was no "pure" form of adolescence and while it is theoretically possible to isolate the traditional from modern, the actual lived experiences of the young cannot be defined in this way. For them life had to be taken as it came and it came in a curious mix of old and new.

Age sorting provides one example of the co-existence of ideas and practices and the way in which transitions were occurring. Teen-agers do not yet seem to have been markedly set apart from either younger or older members of society. Even in the schools, those institutions most organized around age-grading and age-segregation, considerable flexibility was still evident and a much wider range of ages could be found among students in the same grade than is the case today. At the

same time, many educators were attempting to impose more rigid requirements for age of entry at various levels . The move to introduce vocational training might also be seen as a means to enforce more age grouping since students who were not achieving scholastically could still be moved through the system by placement in a "non-academic" stream. On the other hand, many youths well into their twenties were returning to school to take advantage of the programs offered by the Technical High School and many teen-agers who had already entered the work force enrolled in night school classes to take either academic or vocational subjects. It is this type of fluidity which exactly illustrates why any monolithic explanation of youthful experience would be wrong and why we must think of that experience as one which was based on interaction between continuing and new modes of thought and organization.

Nor were teen-agers universally imagined to be dependent members of society without serious responsibilities. In fact, it is clear that families were considered to be the major unit in society for most Edmontonians and individuals were viewed not so much as individuals but as members of families. While parents were seen as owing certain things to their offspring, this relationship was viewed as reciprocal in more than any moral or ethical way. The case of Jean C. has already been cited to show how, even in substantial middle class families, teen-agers were not thought to be entitled to a period of delayed responsibility if circumstances did not allow. In the case of poor and working class families this was even more likely to be the case. Discussions at meetings of Edmonton's Board of Public Welfare demonstrate quite clearly that teen-agers were expected to get out to work to help support their families as soon as they could legally leave school.[1] Thus, while compulsory school attendance legislation and child welfare legislation might reflect views which grew from an idea that teen-agers were "children" and should have an extended period of dependency and delayed responsibility, older notions about family life persisted

and encouraged young people to contribute to the best of their ability to the maintenance of the family.[2] In some cases this meant that the young would continue to live at home and contribute part or all of a wage packet to their parents. In other cases, young people would leave home to relieve their parents of the burden of care as with young men who would try to find work on farms or in forests or young women who would migrate to the city to find employment. In the latter instance, at least, these teen-agers would often send money home, thus replicating one form of the traditional family survival strategies outlined by, among others, Scott and Tilly.[3] Clearly, while increased dependency and delayed responsibility was the experience of some teen-agers it was by no means the experience of all.

However, the slow increase in the percentage of teen-agers staying on in school suggests that more and more youths were having a longer period of dependency within the family. This attests not so much to changing ideas about the nature of adolescence as it does to changing social and economic circumstances in the country.

J.E. Robbins has pointed out that in Canada between 1911 and 1931 there was a continuous gap of about two years between the school leaving age and the attainment of economic independence. But he notes that in 1911 the average age of school leaving was 14.38 and the average age for becoming economically independent was 16. By 1931 the young stayed in school on average until the age of 16.25 and did not achieve economic independence until eighteen. This meant that families which in 1911 only had to support children until they were 16 had, within the next twenty years, to support them until they were eighteen.[4] As Minge-Kalman has argued "the steady and unremitting rise in the cost of reproducing children"[5] created a serious drain on the budgets of families not only because the wages of youths had to be foregone but because of the costs associated with

extracurricular and recreational activities. J.A. Banks, writing about schooling and the middle classes in Britain, explained that

> It was not the four guineas a year [for school fees] that the parents found embarrassing, but the cost involved in providing an adolescent with food and clothing when in an earlier generation he would have been helping to maintain himself.[6]

Besides noting the high cost to families of the increased dependency of teen-agers, Robbins notes that the social costs were also high. While acknowledging that many young people stayed on at school for longer periods between 1911 and 1931, Robbins points out that youth unemployment was becoming an increasingly difficult problem in Canada. Attacking those who criticized rising school costs in the country, Robbins observed

> ...that criticism which confines itself to school costs is straining at a gnat while it uncomplainingly swallows a camel, for school costs constitute only about one-seventh of the total that is borne by society, in one way or another, when a child is raised to maturity. If any progress is to be made, it would appear that the problem of delayed productiveness of youth to which higher school costs are only incidental, must be attacked as a whole.
>
> And it is something more than an economic problem. Delayed independence creates problems in the home, in the community, and in the lives of the individual boys and girls, that are only incidentally economic.[7]

In particular, the social effects of the increased dependency of young men were, Robbins felt, a large fall in marriage rates for the young between 20 and 24 and an increase of 100% in the illegitimate birth rates.[8]

The statistics provided by Robbins allow some insight into changes that were influencing the lives of young in a generalized way and within the national context. Teen-agers were staying in school longer and were experiencing longer periods of dependency which signified a financial drain on their families. In addition, the prolongation of dependency throughout the teen-age years was viewed by some as problematic in terms of both financial and social costs to the state. Furthermore, if

this dependency was, indeed, linked to delayed marriages and delayed marriages meant increased pre-marital sexual activity and enormously heightened levels of illegitimacy, then it is not difficult to see why new attention might come to be focussed on teen-agers. That is, the material reality of shifts in the labour market and changing patterns of access to employment for the young created problems which adults had to address. That they chose to do so both through practical measures and a new and developing ideology of adolescence seems clear at the macro-level.

The pace and form of changes in ideology and practice at the micro-level, however, likely varied from one specific locale to another. Joseph Kett has claimed that towns and small cities were much more responsive to the penetration of the new institutions and ideas about adolescence because adults there could more closely supervise and organize the activities of the young.[9] The case of Edmonton, however, suggests a contrary reading. Perhaps it was precisely because the relatively small size of the city allowed a great deal of contact, easy exchange and informal over-sight that adults as a whole do not appear to have felt any urgent need to create a vast array of special institutions or services to control teen-agers. A more traditional sense of community without rigid differentiations between age groups was still strong and was exemplified in the work of the community leagues around the city. Continuing expressions of inter-generational hostility appear to have been rare. Of course, as we have seen, adults in Edmonton expressed fears about modern misguided youth, about their lack of discipline, about their disregard for school work, about their love of dancing, movies and indecent dress. Many adults would have agreed with the commentator who observed

> The young people of today love luxury. They have bad manners, they scoff at authority and lack respect for their elders....they no longer stand up when their elders come into the room ...they contradict their parents, chat together in the presence of adults, eat gluttonously and tyrannise

their teachers.[10]

Yet this particular commentator was Socrates writing about youth over 2,000 years ago, a clear demonstration of the way in which at least some ideas about the young have persisted over time. Or, as Samuel Johnson observed, "Every old man complains of the growing depravity of the world, of the petulance and insolence of the rising generation."[11] But, while adults have criticized youths, they have also hailed them, too, as the "hope of tomorrow", the "saviours of the world". In replying specifically to one adult's condemnation of youth in Edmonton in the 1920s, an editorial writer said

> ...we still have profoundest faith in our youth in the mass. We are not blind to the fact, of course, that some of our teen age boys and girls are straying far from the straight and narrow way of right living and high thinking. [But] We think, and we have good reason for thinking, that our Canadian boys and girls, our Canadian young men and women, compare very favourably with the best in any country and of any generation.[12]

He went on to cite the athletic prowess of young Edmontonians such as Percy Williams and members of the Grads, the world famous and very successful women's basket-ball team , as evidence of the essential goodness of most young people. Although this link between athletic achievement and right living is reminiscent of the "muscular Christianity" of Arnold's Rugby which Gillis identifies as an important antecedent of more modern attitudes towards adolescence,[13] it also carries on the centuries old tradition of seeing the vitality and strength of young men as confirmation of humanity's future.

After considering the available evidence, one is left with a strong sense that in Edmonton in the 1920s many of the prevailing attitudes towards youth were essentially those of the traditional, popular culture though typically these ideas were neither constantly nor consistently articulated. Indeed, it is difficult to find any continuing discourse on teen-agers as a group even among professionals such as teachers and child welfare workers. The words "adolescent" and "adolescence"

were almost totally absent in the community's vocabulary. Far more common were references to youth or boys and girls or children in their 'teens. However, by the end of the third decade of the century, the impact of psychology and its "scientific" definition of the characteristics of adolescence were being felt. It was, as has been pointed out, most obvious in youth work though in important ways the psychological ideas that were being popularized were those which most closely related to older ones about the nature of youth. For example, it has been pointed out that many of Hall's descriptions of the psychology of youth are simply warmed-over versions of Aristotle's much earlier descriptions.[14] As youth workers adopted and adapted the theories of Hall and other psychologists, considerable dilution occurred and when we consider this dilution took place through several levels as it moved from the larger metropolitan centres of the United States and Great Britain to the smaller ones in central Canada and thence to Edmonton and other regional cities, it is not difficult to understand why, in the end, no radical disjunctures in thought can be found. Many old ideas about youth were simply either reinforced or slowly modified but with added status given through a supposed basis in science.

Far more significant for the history of youth than any shift in ideas was the way in which material realities were changing. Of course, ideas and material realities do not exist in separate worlds but are two parts of the same world. But, in looking at the experiences of the young, it is striking to observe how it is the changed realities of life which give rise to variations in explanantions and new ideas about how to deal with shifts in circumstances. It is not an intellectual accident that historians see when they look at the increased concern and activity of adults for the young in the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-centuries; rather, they find the results of adults trying to understand, explain and cope with very specific changes in the economic, social and demographic structure of their society. As Sheila Allen

puts it

> Age relations (including youth) are part of economic relations and the political and ideological structures in which they take place. It is not the relations between ages which explain change or stability in societies, but change in societies which explains relations between different ages.[15]

What we can discover about the experiences of teen-agers in Edmonton in the 1920s only serves to reinforce this claim.

For example, the increased size of the 13 to 19 year-old age cohort in the population as a whole at the very time when it is likely that the age of sexual maturity was noticeably younger[16] coupled with changing circumstances in the labour market which both made it difficult for youths to find employment and increased the need for additional schooling, forced adults to confront the needs of teen-agers. Indeed, it is staying on at school which most clearly set teen-agers apart as a new and separate age group. As Kett says, "In effect, a stage of life was being defined in terms of a stage of schooling."[17] In addition, technological changes and business marketing strategies which made the mass culture of movies and popular music easily available and allowed the automobile to become a more common mode of transportation and escape for the young contributed to adult perceptions about the existence of some new forms of youth behaviour which had to be explained and managed.

It is not that "adolescence" was suddenly discovered but rather that changing conditions over time forced a re-evaluation and re-working of ideas about what it meant to be a "youth". As Kett put it, what we now call adolescence was not a "pure" discovery but "a twisting and redefinition of familiar materials."[18] Furthermore, as the case of Edmonton demonstrates, this "twisting and redefinition" occurred at an uneven pace and often had a differential impact on teen-agers as a direct consequence of their gender and class location.

FOOTNOTES

[1]CEA, Board of Public Welfare Minutes, 1922-1923, uncatalogued.

[2]Bettina Bradbury, "The Family Economy and Work in an Industrializing City: Montreal in the 1870s," *C.H.A. Historical Papers* (Ottawa: 1979), pp. 71-96; Bettina Bradbury, "The Fragmented Family: Family Strategies in the Face of Death, Illness, and Poverty, Montreal, 1860-1885," in *Childhood and Family in Canadian History*, ed. Joy Parr (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1982),pp. 109-128.

[3]Louise A. Tilly and Joan W. Scott, *Women, Work, and Family* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1978).

[4]J. E. Robbins, "Dependency of Youth," in *Census of Canada*, 1931, Vol. XIII (Ottawa: King's Printer, 1942), pp. 377-439.

[5]Wanda Minge-Kalman, "The Industrial Revolution and the European Family: The Institutionalization of 'Childhood' as a Market for Family Labor," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 20 (July 1978), p. 461.

[6]J. A. Banks quoted in Minge-Kalman, "The Industrial Revolution", p. 464.

[7]Robbins, "Dependency", p. 422.

[8]Ibid., p. 377.

[9]Kett, *Rites of Passage*, Chapter 9.

[10]Socrates quoted in Brake, *The Sociology of Youth Culture*, p. 1.

[11]Samuel Johnson quoted in *Dictionary of Quotations*, Collected and Arranged by Bergen Evans (New York: Delacourt Press, 1968), p. 789.

[12]"What of Our Boys and Girls?", *Western Catholic*, 8 August 1929, p. 4.

[13]Gillis, *Youth and History*.

[14]Fox, "Is Adolescence a Phenomenon?"

[15]Sheila Allen, "Some Theoretical Problems in the Study of Youth," *The Sociological Review* 16 (November 1968), p. 321.

[16]Carol J. Diers, "Historical Trends in the Age at Menarche and Menopause," *Psychological Reports* 34 (1974): 931-937; Peter Laslett, "Age at Menarche in Europe Since the Eighteenth Century," in *The Family in History: Interdisciplinary Essays* ed. Theodore K. Rabb and Robert I. Rotberg (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1973), pp. 28-47.

[17]Kett's contribution to *Youth: Transition to Adulthood*, Report of the Panel on Youth of the President's Science Advisory Council (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974), p.23.

[18]Ibid., p.22.

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Records of the YMCA
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